the weekly
Standard
NOVEMBER 1, 1999
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FALL BOOKS ISSUE
J. BOTTUM ON HARRY POTTER,
NOEMIE EMERY ON THOMAS SOWELL,
AND MORE

Arms Control
The End of an Illusion

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

The Myth of the Al Gore Comeback
BY MATTHEW REES

The Myth of Republican Isolationism
BY DAVID FRUM

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THE UNTOUCHABLES

CO-OPS, MUNIS AND FEDERALLY-OWNED UTILITIES GAME CONGRESS

There once was a time when the debate over the restructuring of America's utility industry was seen as an opportunity to correct decades-old competitive imbalances in the marketplace. This would have meant a leveling of the proverbial "playing field"... with rural electric co-ops and municipal-owned utilities being forced to give up many of their conspicuous federally-conferred privileges. This would also have meant getting the federal government out of the electricity business by putting the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) on a path towards privatization.

CO-OPS

This debate never happened. Instead, co-ops, munis and federally-owned utilities have not only escaped fundamental reform—they are on the verge of grabbing numerous new advantages for themselves.

TVA

The "Jurassic" federally-owned utilities—genuine museum pieces, they are—will lumber along as if the restructuring debate never occurred... because for them it didn't!

City Hall-owned utilities—municipal monopolists who resist every call for competition—are now likely to secure new tax-exempt giveaways for themselves... at our expense.

MUNIS

The co-ops have achieved a prodigious booty of carve-outs, exemptions, exclusions and special favors for themselves—and they still want more. Much more!

What happened to the great "restructuring" debate? Things that should have been at the top of Congress' reform agenda... are now at the top of Congress' untouchables list.

Citizens for State Power
122 South Patrick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
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David Keene, Co-Chair • Karen Kerrigan, Co-Chair • Stephen Merrill, National Chair • Grover Norquist, Co-Chair • Craig Shirley, Consulting Director

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The UN can be frustrating, but it works: Resolving conflicts, confronting terrorism, preventing world war. The UN continues to work in America's interests in dangerous and distant places around the world.

But the US is two years behind in paying UN dues and if we don't pay this year, the US could lose its vote in the UN General Assembly. Because America has always believed in peace and national security, Congress and the President should keep our commitment to the UN and pay these overdue bills.

Great nations keep their word.

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The signing of the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact, outlawing war. AP/Wide World Photos

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the weekly Standard

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What Goes Around . . .

House Republicans have now spent roughly $450,000 on television ads blasting eight of their Democratic colleagues for supporting a raid on the Social Security trust fund. The ads appear to have been successful at beginning to make the Republicans, for the first time ever, the party that defends Social Security. The evidence? Democrats are going berserk.

At a meeting Tuesday night, Oct. 19, between the president and congressional leaders, Clinton complained about the ads to Denny Hastert and Dick Armey. And House Democrats aired the ads at one of their caucus meetings, so those members who hadn't yet been targeted could figure out a response. North Dakota Democrats have even started running ads to defend Earl Pomeroy, one of those whose support for Social Security is being challenged.

The best evidence of all that Democrats are worried came on the morning of Oct. 21, when Tom Daschle and Richard Gephardt had a joint press conference in which they each gave an opening statement moaning about the ads. Gephardt in particular was so hysterical over what he thought was unfair demagoguing that it seems to have affected his memory. He had never seen such ads, said the House's minority leader, "when the election's over a year away, to affect the legislative outcome on the floor of the House. We're in a new world here, folks." Yet when a reporter asked Gephardt how he squared his statement with the shellacking the White House handed to Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich over Medicare in 1995, the minority leader suddenly had less to say. Indeed, asked about the ads aired during the government shutdown, Gephardt could only say, "I don't remember that."

Hastert has been the driving force behind the ads, and has leaned on Tom Davis, the House GOP campaign chairman, to keep airing them even after Davis's staff expressed concern about the amount of money being expended. Some wondered whether Davis was fully committed to the ads, but he put that to rest with his response to Dennis Moore of Kansas, one of the targeted Democrats, who personally complained to him. He told him Republicans would run ads in his district only for as long as Democrats ran ads in the district of Todd Tiahrt, a House Republican from Kansas, in 1995-96. Those ads ran for nine months. ♦

Cuomo's Vendetta, Cont.

Readers may recall Matthew Rees's description several months ago in these pages of how Andrew Cuomo, secretary of housing and urban development, had been waging war on HUD's inspector general, Susan Gaffney. The General Accounting Office has now reviewed the lucrative legal contracts awarded by Cuomo's top aide, Howard Glaser, to investigate charges of racial discrimination lodged against Gaffney. The GAO's conclusions affirm, in a devastating way, that Cuomo has been using underhanded tactics to go after Gaffney.

The report found, for example, that HUD's decision to handpick two lawyers to investigate the discrimination charge, and award them contracts totaling $100,000 (the normal cost is about $3,000), represented "significant deviation" from the standard process of investigating discrimination complaints. And these actions, according to the GAO, "contributed to an appearance that HUD had manipulated the procurement process."

As for Glaser's role, which had him suspend an investigation already underway and then engineer the hiring of the new legal team (which included two former Clinton administration lawyers)—the GAO characterizes it as "extraordinary." Indeed, the report quotes, by name, two HUD officials who handle discrimination complaints as saying Glaser's interference was "unprecedented."

Surely the report's most revealing finding is the section documenting the number of discrimination complaints filed by all HUD employees. It turns out that the rate of complaints filed against Gaffney's office is equal or below that for the rest of HUD. And since Gaffney took the inspector general job in 1993, the rate of complaints against that office has been lower than that of the Office of the Secretary, which Cuomo of course has occupied since early 1997. Mr. Pot, meet Mr. Kettle. ♦

The Art of Persuasion

Further proof that the secret to success is complaining. Tom Joyner, host of a popular, nationally syndicated morning radio show with a predominantly black audience, and Tavis Smiley, a host on the cable network Black Entertainment Television, recently took aim at computer superstore CompUSA. The two charged that CompUSA—get this—didn't spend enough money advertising to blacks (perhaps on BET and Joyner's show?). Over the course of 10 weeks Joyner and Smiley used their shows to hammer at CompUSA, calling the company's top executive James Halpin "ebonically challenged" and complaining that CompUSA had an all-white executive board—it didn't.

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After weeks of public pounding, Halpin the other day did what any corporate honcho would do these days—he groveled for two hours with Joyner and Smiley in the law offices of Dallas mayor Ron Kirk. Halpin then went on the *Tom Joyner Morning Show*, said that CompUSA had unwittingly discriminated against blacks, and then promised to hire a black ad agency. But that's not all. Though no one alleged that consumers had been discriminated against on the basis of race, CompUSA agreed to start discriminating: Black customers who had written to Joyner and Smiley will now receive a 10 percent discount on their next purchase (isn't differential price based on race illegal?). At the end of Halpin's radio appearance, Joyner told his listeners, "CompUSA is a good company now." ♦

Clintonism of the Week

"Governor Bush is the first candidate in the history of the modern era, when we've had federal financing, who has given it up so that an unlimited amount of money could be raised, so that puts all the others at, I think, a relative disadvantage. It's something that some people urged on me four years ago, because I could have done that. And I decided it wasn't fair, and I didn't do it. I didn't think it was the right thing to do."

No, better to do the right thing: receive bags of cash from overseas, hit up Buddhist nuns, and rent out the Lincoln Bedroom. ♦

Beyond Parody

Noting that "meat consumption is just as dangerous to public health as tobacco use," the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine has recommended that the Justice Department "begin preparing a case against major meat producers and retailers." Obviously, they haven't heard of the Atkins diet. ♦

The Eternal Robert Byrd

One of the overlooked highlights of the debate on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was seeing Democrat Robert Byrd of West Virginia lecture Trent Lott on Senate rules and decorum, after Lott had denied him the right to speak. Byrd didn't take kindly to this, and when given the opportunity to speak delivered 15 minutes of parliamentary rabble rousing. "There's too much of what the House does that we don't need to do in this Senate," said Byrd. "And I'm afraid there are too many senators who feel that we need to get to be like the House."

A pitfall of a career as long as Byrd's is the length of the paper trail. Here's Robert Byrd during Senate debate on September 21, 1978: "I wish I had the rules of the House over here at times. . . . There are lots of rules over there I would just love to have." Thus the hidden constant of his career: It hardly matters whether you follow House rules or Senate rules so long as Byrd rules. ♦

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Casual

Bonjour, tristesse

Any time I e-mail a friend that I'm working on an article in Paris, he'll send me back a short note reading: "Tough assignment!" or "Life is hard, huh?"

Well, it is. This is, in fact, one of the saddest weeks I've had in years. I'm working myself to death in a lonely (and exceedingly modest) business hotel. This piece, for instance, is being written at 2:40 in the morning on a Thursday—a Thursday that was supposed to (and will) begin with my getting up at 6:00 A.M. to catch a train. To go to a slum. To spend 12 hours interviewing people in a language it embarrasses me to speak.

It used to be a mystery to me why Balzac's characters were always poisoning themselves and throwing themselves into the Seine. *Why don't they just go to a museum?* I used to think. *Why don't they get a nice choucroute garnie or a confit de canard?* But now I understand their *mentalité*, as they say over here. Under ordinary high-pressure work circumstances, Paris can become as dark, utilitarian, and un-magical as any city. It used to be that when I came to Paris, and I arranged to meet someone a block from, say, the Arc de Triomphe, I'd think, "Wow, I have an appointment near the *ark-de-tree-ornf*!" Nowadays, I think, "Why the hell do I have to schlep all the way out to the Arc de Triomphe?"

What's more, last week was one of those weeks when I would have preferred being in America to being anyplace else on earth. With whom can one discuss baseball playoffs here? Certainly not the Manchester United fans who descended on Marseilles in droves when I was there a couple of days ago. Their arrival inspired considerable panic on the part of the local police, because last year, when England played Tunisia in the World Cup in Marseilles, the British supporters sent a few dozen people to the hospital with brain damage and gouged-out eyes. This is rather a different way of enjoying sports than sitting around the television weeping over the Green Monster and the Curse of the Bambino.

The thousand national police deployed around the center of Marseilles gave the city a war-zone feel.

Darren Gygi

Good to get back to Paris. Unfortunately, Man-United's fans, angered at a 1-0 loss, are drifting home—through Paris, of course. Tonight, as I came back to my hotel, there were six of them milling—no, staggering—about on the corner. One of them spotted a French person minding his own business across the street and began wading across to him with fists clenched, yelling: "Oy! Yer wanna go, mate? Yer wanna go, yer f—er? Yer f—ing froggy!"

Luckily, not even a soccer hooligan would ever mistake me for a French person. There are two especially glaring signs that I'm not French: First, having foolishly brought only a single carton of Camels on the trip, I've had to switch over to the next-closest thing, which are Gauloise *brunes*. (For some strange reason, the unfiltered Camels in Europe taste like a light cigarette.) Even in a country where most people smoke, I have never—*never, ever, ever*—seen a French person under the age of 50 smoke a French cigarette. (Maybe they keep them on the shelves here only to sell to the curators of some future Museum of Proletarian Culture. Or maybe the junior-year-abroad Hemingways-of-tomorrow you still see all over the sixth *Arrondissement* smoke enough of them to keep the company profitable.)

Second, I don't have a cell phone, referred to here as a *portable*. Or maybe it's *pour-table*, since they tend to get used primarily in restaurants. Anyone who's eaten out in Europe in the last decade will have noticed natty men yapping into phones at their clients, while their wives stare up at the ceiling and fiddle with their food. But sometime in the last two years, these little gadgets have become not just popular but universal, and held to be not just convenient but indispensable. No one asks you if you have a *portable*; they just ask you for your number. When I told the secretary of a former government minister with whom I was arranging an interview that I didn't have one, she actually said, "That will be a problem."

The reason it was a problem, and the reason cell phones are universal in France, is that the French national pastime, as far as I can tell, is standing up journalists. A well-known French writer left me in the lurch for coffee this afternoon, at exactly the same restaurant where a well-known French banker stood me up for lunch two years ago, and down the street from a place where a French politician stood me up last year. If a journalist has a cell phone, you can call him up and tell him you're *désolé, mais* . . . And if he doesn't have a cell phone, well, then, that's his fault, isn't it?

When I came out of the café, the fine *pluie* that had been falling when I went in had turned into a full-blown, torrential *orage*. So I lit a Gauloise and, as they say in the sixth *Arrondissement*, walked back to my hotel in the rain.

Christopher Caldwell

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Lauding Linus

The Scrapbook item on Linus Pauling made fun reading but wasn't very accurate ("An A-Pauling Lapse of Judgment," Oct. 18). Compliments of Dr. Pauling, scientific inquiry has found significant benefits from vitamin C as a source of antioxidants for combating cancer. Respectable institutions such as the Mayo Clinic, Harvard University, and Tufts have published studies showing the importance of vitamin C for preventing everything from cataracts to cardiovascular disease. So, give us a break—I mean the large number of Americans who stuff themselves silly with vitamin C when it looks like they are coming down with a cold. Vitamin C is as patriotic as apple pie and a lot better for you. Instead of replaying the Cold War when Pauling's name is mentioned, let us celebrate his contributions to a world that he has made safer from pain and fatal illness.

As to peace, by golly, every time someone mentions peace, conservatives get the collywobbles. I believe in peace through strength, and, as a self-identified conservative, have supported every program, including those that often seemed cockamamie, because we needed every weapon in our arsenal to beat the Communists. So, let us keep testing nuclear weapons, but not in the atmosphere where harmful elements can all too easily find their way back into the air, water, and soil of our hometowns. Pauling won his second Nobel Prize for opposing atmospheric testing, a position that has been followed by Republican presidents since Nixon.

This is what the Linus Pauling exhibit is all about—excellence in teaching, expanding the frontiers of scientific knowledge, and the pursuit of peace. Not so bad, even for the Republican agenda.

Alfred Balitzer
Claremont, CA

Falling for Pat

The Scrapbook was perceptive to note that my view of Pat Buchanan has changed substantially over the past seven years ("Fifth Columnist?" Oct. 18). As the costs and dangers of ill-conceived global interventionism, high levels of immigration, and a trade regime that pushes American workers out of the middle class become more apparent, I expect that the opinions of many of your readers, writers, and editors will change as well.

Scott McConnell
Vienna, VA

A Man for All Ages

William Kristol's article on the pope is the most insightful and succinct appreciation of the religious, political, and philosophical achievements of John Paul II to have appeared in the secular or religious press ("The Man of Our Age," Oct. 18). Bravo to Kristol and to George Weigel, whose splendid new biography *Witness to Hope* provided the occasion for Kristol's reflections.

Robert P. George
Princeton, NJ

All Stations Considered

Let me see if I have this right: Andrew Ferguson is whining that he can no longer get his classical music fix during morning drive time because his public radio station has opted for state-subsidized news babble instead of state-subsidized Mozart ("Morning Perdition," Oct. 18).

I have good news. He can get all the drive-time classical music he wants further down the dial on WGMS (103.5), one of the last radio stations in the country that is privately owned and schedules classical music exclusively. Doesn't Ferguson support free enterprise? If not, I have more good news. Most radios in the Washington area are able to pull in the signal of Baltimore's WBJC (91.5). WBJC is the kind of socialized public radio Ferguson seems to prefer, offering nothing but classical music. There are no hateful commercials, but you do get the usual pledge drives to fill the space between Vivaldi and Beethoven.

John Kattler
Baltimore, MD

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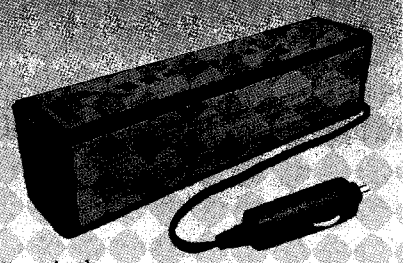

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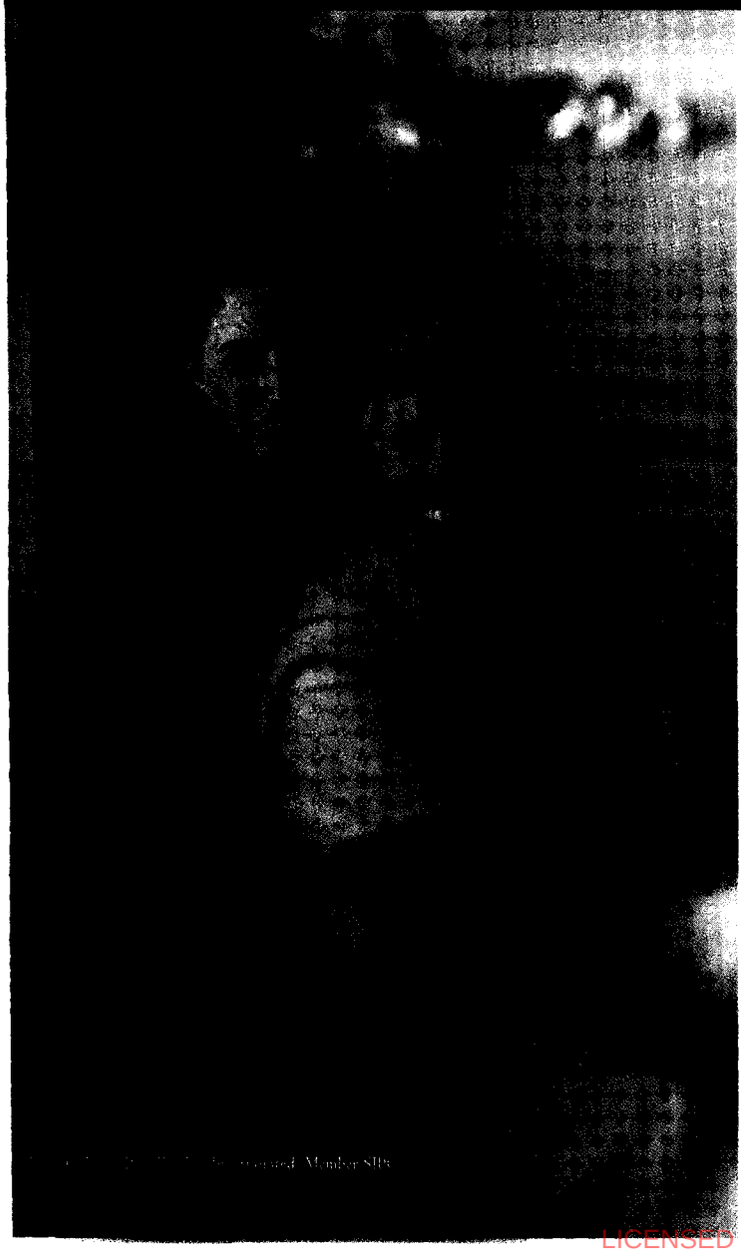

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the weekly Standard

Princeton and Its Principles

Steve Forbes has it right: The presence on the Princeton University faculty of Peter Singer—the Australian animal-rights activist who proclaims that a baby is of less value than a pig and who advocates a 28-day trial period before accepting newborns into the human race—is "intolerable and unconscionable."

But Forbes, whose family has given millions to the university since his graduation in 1970 and who sits on its board of trustees with the likes of Bill Bradley and Senator Bill Frist, has now been publicly rebuked by Robert H. Rawson Jr., the board's chairman. "The trustees collectively have a special and overarching responsibility to advance and protect the core values of the University, which include the essential principles of academic freedom," Rawson wrote two weeks ago. "We sincerely regret that one of our members apparently is not willing to accept this fundamental responsibility." This was in response to a letter of complaint from Amy Gutmann (who directs Princeton's Center for Human Values at which Singer holds the chair in bioethics), George Kateb (who led the search committee that proposed Singer's appointment), and two other faculty members.

Let's be honest: Peter Singer was selected for his Princeton chair precisely because his selection would generate controversy.

The blow-up over Forbes is only the latest installment in the controversy that has raged since Singer came to Princeton in July. There was the public debate with the blind professor who accused him of desiring her death, the protesters in wheelchairs hauled away by the police from his classes, the ongoing argument about whether utilitarian moral theory actually implies that there are, in Singer's words, "living human beings whose lives may intentionally be terminated"—the newborn and the handicapped, the elderly and the infirm, and the unborn, of course (whom Singer believes are as much living humans as any other infants, and so equally eligible for death).

But let's be honest. Peter Singer was not brought to Princeton to slaughter the first baby, like the ceremonial cutting of a ribbon to open a new dormitory. He was not even hired primarily to advance the legality of infanticide, though the Laurence Rockefeller/population-control money that finances his position may desire that eventual result.

No, Singer was selected for a Princeton chair by Kateb and Gutmann precisely because his selection would generate controversy, and thereby use the stature of Princeton to raise as a debatable proposition—the inviolability of human life—what most of us supposed was a fundamental principle. "John Paul II proclaims that the widespread acceptance of abortion is a mortal threat to the traditional moral order," Singer wrote in "Killing Babies Isn't Always Wrong," a 1995 article in the London *Spectator*. "I sometimes think that he and I at least share the virtue of seeing clearly what is at stake."

There's a megalomania here, of course: a vision of himself in which the gigantic figure of Peter Singer sits across from the pope at the chessboard of humankind, locked in a grim battle for the future of all us little folk. But there's also a sleight of hand—so obvious, it's positively shameless—in which any disagreement is arbitrarily defined as religious and everything religious is arbitrarily banned from rational discourse.

Academic courtesy, the collegiality that professors are supposed to show, has kept from news reports what is common knowledge among the faculty: that Singer is a second-rater. This is a man who has no real standing in bioethics, no significant publications in ethical theo-

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ry, no major importance even in his own narrow world of utilitarianism. To animal-rights and abortion activists, Peter Singer is a founding philosopher, but to philosophers, he's mostly an activist. On a campus with faculty of the stature of the epistemologist Saul Kripke, the constitutional lawyer Robert George, and, yes, even Gutmann and Kateb, Singer is an embarrassment. It's no accident that he was not invited to join the philosophy department when he received his chair at the Center for Human Values, and he remains the only faculty member without an appointment to an actual academic department.

This is the disingenuousness of Gutmann and Kateb when they complain that Forbes's "attack on academic freedom" has "struck at the heart of Princeton." Singer doesn't belong at Princeton, either as thinker, teacher, or even on the spurious grounds of intellectual diversity, which his defenders—with breathtaking bad faith—also invoke.

There exist distinguished thinkers with views opposed to Singer's—the British philosopher G.E.M. Anscombe, for instance, who since the 1950s has translated Wittgenstein, written on moral theory, and defended pro-life positions. Suppose Anscombe were to argue (as she has not) that doctors who perform abortions have ceased to be human beings and we have a duty to assassinate them. Now *there* is a wrongheaded view that's currently unrepresented amid the ostensible diversity of thought at Ivy League schools. But can anyone imagine the faculty and trustees rising in the name of academic freedom to defend the right of someone to pronounce it from a chair at Princeton University?

Of course not. Like professorial collegiality and the duty of trustees to defend their university, academic freedom is a real principle. But in the hands of Singer's defenders, it has become only a slogan, useful chiefly for bullying into silence anyone who objects to their efforts to shatter the culture's last vestiges of traditional morality. And, by prompting Rawson's rebuke of Forbes, the device has proved successful once more.

It was, in fact, G.E.M. Anscombe who foresaw part of this. In a brilliant essay back in 1958, she pointed out that somewhere between John Stuart Mill in the 1840s and G.E. Moore in the 1920s, the British utilitarian tradition lost the ability to explain why the taking of innocent life is wrong. And she predicted that there would eventually come along someone willing to say that we *should* kill babies, because utilitarianism offers no explanation of why we shouldn't.

Anscombe seems to have imagined that the result would be the rejection of utilitarian ethics—for, after all, killing babies *is* wrong and a moral theory that arrives at a contrary result must be mistaken. What she didn't guess is that the one who came along to proclaim infanticide would be a second-rater like Peter Singer, or that he would be promoted as a stalking horse by those who don't actually care one way or the other about the sufferings of handicapped children or the philosophical problems of utilitarian theory, but only about wrecking the last remaining moral compass by which the culture can still steer.

But who could have guessed it? There is a sense in which Singer's promoters have already won. His presence at Princeton compels presidential candidates to take a position *against infanticide*. It forces columnists and pundits to explain that they are personally *opposed to baby-killing*, though they can't quite say why. Even if, after extended discussion, we answer as a nation that Singer is wrong, it is too late. His appointment transforms the slaughter of the innocents into a debatable moral question rather than an undebatable moral principle—the touchstone by which we are able to judge the rightness or wrongness of other moral claims.

And the key fact in the whole controversy is that Peter Singer didn't do it; any crackpot can rant and rave. Princeton did it, by giving that crackpot a distinguished chair. The fame, history, and eminence of our great colleges lend an immediate prominence to those they hire. Princeton University let itself be used, thoroughly and degradingly, by Amy Gutmann and her Center for Human Values, by George Kateb and his search committee, and by the population-control money financing them. Don't any of his fellow trustees—Mr. Bradley? Senator Frist?—see why Steve Forbes objects in the name of the school he loves?

—J. Bottum, for the Editors

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Al Gore, from Dawn to Dusk

Rumors of a vibrantly reborn campaign have been greatly exaggerated. BY MATTHEW REES

IT WASN'T EXACTLY the rhetoric of a surging candidate: "We are beginning to solve some of our problems," Al Gore told reporters on October 20. His campaign, of course, has had countless fits and starts over the past six months. But Gore and his allies say he's "turned the corner." In the words of senator Tom Harkin, an Iowa Democrat, "There's a new energy out there that I had never seen before."

Maybe. There's no denying Gore has been running a more aggressive campaign in recent weeks. Zinging Bill Bradley—for voting in favor of Reaganomics and for retiring in 1996—seems weak, but it shows Gore has turned off the cruise control. Similarly, his decision to cut a television ad immediately after Republicans defeated the nuclear test ban treaty revealed a spontaneity that would have been unthinkable just a few weeks ago (John Podesta, Clinton's chief of staff, was steamed Gore didn't check with the White House before running with the ad). Chris Lehane, Gore's spokesman, now describes the campaign as a "lean, mean, fighting machine"—a characterization that wouldn't have passed the smell test before Gore announced his campaign office was moving to Tennessee and shedding countless staff.

But Gore still has his share of problems. Last week, a new Iowa poll showed that, for the first time, Bradley and Gore are in a statistical dead heat. And on October 20, the *Washington Post*'s "In the Loop" column reported that three people have turned down offers to become the campaign's communications director, which should be a highly sought-after job. The press secretary post is also vacant.

A more fundamental problem for Gore is money. At the end of September, he and Bradley had about the same amount of cash on hand. But Gore has already spent about 25 percent of what's permitted in Iowa. Add to that his new TV ads, and the Bradley campaign estimates he'll soon be at 50 percent. Bradley, by contrast, has spent just 5 percent of the legal limit.

Money becomes less important if Gore begins to energize voters. But can he? On October 20, Gore made four public appearances. I attended all of them, in the hope of finding out whether he has truly "turned the corner."

10:40 A.M., Congress Heights United Methodist Church

The 75 people in attendance stand and applaud as Gore briskly enters the basement auditorium of this church in Anacostia, the poorest (and blackest) section of Washington, D.C. Outfitted in a charcoal suit, white shirt, and sporty rep tie, he's here to unveil a set of proposals to combat deadbeat dads. The timing is not a coincidence: Bradley announced a few weeks ago he would be releasing his own child-poverty proposals one day from now. Gore's office only called the church a few days ago to see if it would host the event.

That Gore is being forced to respond like this underscores how far he's fallen. Yet, he did succeed at quickly putting together an event and a proposal to preempt Bradley. This suggests the speedy decision-making Gore showcased after the test-ban treaty vote may become the rule of his campaign, and not the exception.

The session starts 40 minutes late—bad symbolism for an event promoting personal responsibility. But Gore connects with the audience during a 20-minute presentation delivered without a podium and almost entirely without notes. At moments, he is Clintonesque, beginning his talk by congratulating the minister's daughter on her recent engagement. The audience applauds when he proposes denying men who owe child support the ability to get a new credit card (it's a wonder Dick Morris didn't think of this). At other moments, he is, uh, Goring: He should know better than to say, "Here are some statistics to reflect on." And his talk is long on government solutions, wrapping him in the civil-servant mantle he needs to shed.

Gore is more effective when he sits with a group of young mothers and fathers and solicits their views on the challenges of parenthood. A young black woman describes her juggling act as a single mother, a full-time worker, and a law school student. Gore has a moment of Clintonian empathy, saying "I'm in awe of your achievements." Later, he seems even more relaxed, holding a 2-year-old girl on his lap. Her parents describe raising her while they were both unemployed. Gore abruptly asks, "How did that make you feel?" The mother says it taught her "if you want something, you just have to work for it." Gore nods solemnly, as if it's a sentiment he's uniquely qualified to appreciate.

3:30 P.M., Indian Treaty Room, Old Executive Office Building

Gore is here to sign a "memorandum of understanding" between the Small Business Administration and the Social Security Administration, pledging the agencies to coordinate efforts to expand employment for the disabled. But because he's a busy guy—he's just come from a lunch on Capitol Hill with Senate Democrats—the event begins without him. A dis-

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abled woman is five minutes into her presentation on the agreement's importance when White House aides begin shuffling in and out. The woman eventually stops to ask what all the commotion is about. Told the vice president has arrived, she promptly resumes speaking.

When Gore finally enters the room, he still looks loose in his charcoal suit. Only there's nothing informal about the Indian Treaty Room, with its high ceiling and ornate walls. During his 15-minute speech, Gore stands planted behind the podium. I notice he's reading from his notecards, as he pleads for equal treatment of the disabled, saying he believes in it "with all my heart." There is applause, but his delivery is as lifeless as a seafood platter.

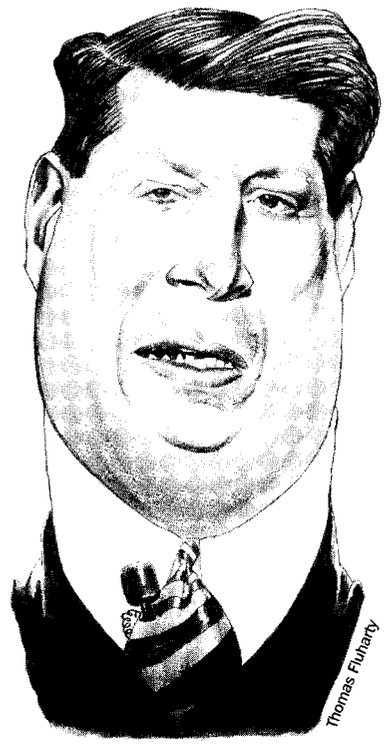
The climate improves as Gore tells a poignant story about his blind aunt, and the audience of 50 people, many of them disabled or advocates for the disabled, lap it up. The notecards are nowhere to be seen when Gore recounts his meeting with Stephen Hawking, whom he describes as the "smartest man in the whole world." He obviously thinks the crowd will like hearing him say that about the wheelchair-bound Hawking. And everyone laughs when he describes Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* as a book "I pretended to read."

For a routine signing ceremony, Gore's performance is slightly better than I expected. But nothing about it suggests a dramatic change in persona. And, then, there is his penchant for sounding disingenuous. He prefaces his comments about Hawking by noting, "Some of you may have heard me tell this story. It's a true story." This makes me wonder: Why does Gore feel the need to describe a story he's about to tell as "true"? Does he now make a practice of larding his speeches, Clinton-style, with anecdotes made out of thin air?

4:30 P.M., Marriott Hotel

The vice president is late again, 20 minutes this time. It's the annual convention of the Civil Service Employees Association, a New York state union. A mischievous audio engineer decides to fill the cavernous room with Aretha Franklin's "Respect," followed by Queen's "We Will Rock You." Dozens of union members begin gyrating to the music. I wish Gore would arrive.

A popular theory has it that Gore can defeat Bradley by forsaking his moderation and running as a Walter Mondale-style labor loyalist. This speech is evidence he's giving that theory a test run, as he spends nearly half an hour touting his liberal credentials and ridiculing Republicans.



Al Gore

Gore connects with the crowd early by describing himself as "pro-worker, pro-union, and pro-collective bargaining." There's nothing courageous about anything Gore says—he doesn't, for example, challenge his audience with any rhetoric about pushing the Democratic party to the center. But he does take pains to distinguish "moderate Republican" voters, many of whom belong to unions, from "extreme" Republicans.

But then, starting to sound like Joe McCarthy, Gore warns darkly that the GOP would base its Supreme Court appointments on "private meetings with Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson." On a softer note, Gore tells the audience that when his father was Tennessee labor commissioner, Gore Sr. set a state minimum wage of 25 cents an hour. "Sounds like one of the Republican platform positions." The crowd of 1,000 hoots with pleasure.

But these days no Gore speech would be complete without an autobiographical riff and at least one gaffe. This speech has both. Gore talks at some length about his family, noting he and Tipper have just celebrated their 29th anniversary and that they have just become grandparents. Bill Clinton is referred to only cryptically. Obviously, Gore is setting himself up as the kind of family-values exemplar the president is not.

And near the end of his speech Gore thanks the CSEA for its endorsement. The people around me look at each other and ask, "What endorsement?" As a matter of fact, CSEA hasn't endorsed Gore. Thanking organizations for support they have yet to offer is a mistake no campaign should make, particularly that of an incumbent vice president. Although the speech is well-received, the glitch stands out.

8:20 P.M., National Building Museum

It's the final public event of Gore's day, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee gala. His strategy is to serve up more red meat than one finds at the Palm, which is wise. No one comes to massive fund-raisers like these to hear speeches.

Daylight saving time, says Gore, is "the one time we all get to act like Senate Republicans by turning back the clock." His rhetoric goes from light and fluffy to overkill. Republicans who blocked the nuclear test ban treaty, he says, are "not worthy to run the United States Senate. They are an embarrassment to this country."

But the biggest moment of the gala comes when Gore introduces Miss America, Heather French, for a special announcement. She comes to the podium and says she's switching from Republican to Democrat,

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because of her concerns about "veterans' issues." The crowd of 1,200 goes wild.

That very morning, French had been quoted in the *Washington Post* saying she was thinking about switching parties. She tells me Gore staffers tracked her down—she was visiting Washington to talk about homeless veterans—and offered her a speaking spot at the dinner if she'd hurry up and make her switch official. There was, however, one small detail that prevented this from being a public-relations coup for the vice president: French told me she hasn't decided whether she'll be supporting Gore or Bradley.

Following Gore's speech, a quick survey of Democratic opinion reveals enthusiasm for the vice president's newly energized campaign. "He's on a roll now. . . . He's where he needs to be," beams fund-raiser-cum-mortgage guarantor, Terry McAuliffe. "The campaign seems quite a lot better in the last few weeks," opines New York senator Charles Schumer. "From the standpoint of Iowa, it's a whole new ballgame," says Harkin. Hillary Clinton tells me, "I think he's doing great!"

"Great" is an exaggeration; "better" might be more appropriate. Gore is running a more intelligent, and more nimble, campaign than he was just a few weeks ago. Shrinking the number of staff, for example, can only help. It saves money—Gore had been spending more on personnel than any other presidential campaign—and makes-decision making easier. And moving to Tennessee is nicely symbolic. As a speaker, Gore still has a long way to go, but his delivery is improving and he seems to be connecting more with his audiences.

But what does it all add up to? One of the first real tests of whether Gore's vaunted new campaign can fight off Bradley comes October 27, when the two Democrats square off at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Gore seems to understand he can no longer afford to be timid. The question now is whether he can avoid looking desperate. ♦

New Republicans in the Old Dominion

Gov. Jim Gilmore's mission: to make Virginia a GOP-controlled state. BY FRED BARNES

Richmond, Virginia

IT WASN'T AN EXPLICIT DEAL—an early presidential primary in Virginia in exchange for fund-raising help—but it was pretty close. Last winter, aides of Virginia governor Jim Gilmore chatted with strategists for Texas governor George W. Bush's presidential campaign. Though Gilmore hadn't endorsed Bush at the time (later he did), his aides wanted to know if moving the Virginia primary up to February 29 would suit Bush. The answer was yes, Virginia being a strong Bush state.

Indeed, the Bush and Gilmore camps now call Virginia a "firewall," certain to protect Bush if he stumbles in Iowa, New Hampshire, or South Carolina. In return, Gilmore got celebrity assistance in pursuing his dream of Republican control of the Virginia legislature. Bush was the featured speaker at two Gilmore fund-raisers, Bush's wife Laura appeared at another, and his father, President Bush, was the attraction at a fourth. The result: at least $2 million funneled through Gilmore's PAC to GOP candidates around Virginia this fall.

The quasi-deal is a measure of how badly Gilmore wants to lock up Virginia in the November 2 election. "We've arrived at a historic crossroads and I'm the governor of Virginia," Gilmore says. Thanks largely to him, Republicans have a better than even shot at capturing the statehouse and making Virginia the second southern state entirely in GOP hands (the first is Florida). The top three statewide offices, plus the state senate, are already held by Republicans. So the target is the 100-seat house of delegates, now split 50-50. Boyd Marcus, Gilmore's chief of staff, predicts Republicans will wind up with 51 to 55 seats.

That small a pickup may not sound like much. But Virginia could be a bellwether state. In 1993, Republican George Allen talked up conservative issues and upset favored Democrat Mary Sue Terry in the governor's race. The next year, Republicans won Congress, using many of the same issues. "You can't always say what happens in Virginia is a precursor," admits Marcus. "But sometimes it is."

At the least, victory in Virginia would show that realignment toward the GOP, while stalled nationally, is not entirely dead. And it would allow Republicans to control apportionment of the state's 11 congressional districts based on the 2000 census. That could lead to a potential pickup of two or three House seats. "If we do win [in 1999], it's historic," says Gilmore. "If we don't, it's just more of the same."

Since the 1960s, Republicans have made steady progress. By 1987, they held 36 seats in the house and 10 of the 40 in the senate. In 1995, the numbers were 47 and 20. Then-lieutenant governor Don Beyer, a Democrat, broke the tie in the senate, leaving it in Democratic hands. The 1995 race was significant because it marked the first major effort by a GOP governor—Allen—to win the statehouse. However, he started late and made the election a referendum on his governorship, notably the rejection by Democrats of his tax

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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and spending cuts. He failed.

Gilmore's tack is as different from Allen's as Gilmore himself is from the ex-governor. (Allen is favored to oust Democrat Charles Robb in next year's U.S. Senate race in Virginia.) Allen is charismatic, Gilmore methodical. "Gilmore doesn't have the personality of Allen, but he has the intelligence to make up for it," says political scientist Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia. On election night in 1997, even as he was winning the governor's race overwhelmingly, he expressed disappointment that Republicans had failed again to win the legislature. Within weeks, he'd begun planning for 1999.

Gilmore's aides polled in many parts of the state and concentrated on recruiting candidates in winnable districts. Gilmore himself took sides in four primary fights, winning two. "I'm prepared to take a few chances with my popularity," he says. What's been "extraordinary" about Gilmore's effort, says Sabato, is the fund-raising. "He's done what no previous Republican governor has tried. He's outraised Democrats, and in many districts he's outstrategized them."

What's also been unusual is Gilmore's conniving. After his election in 1997, he began appointing Democrats in the legislature to his new administration. He focused on Democrats in swing districts, and the strategy worked. Republicans won all seven special elections and took over the state senate. This year, the outcome depends on a dozen contests, mostly in southside Virginia or Fairfax County, the Washington suburb. Republican PACs may funnel as much as $4 million into these races.

Gilmore is an unqualified conservative ("Conservatism is conservatism," he says), but his brand is close to Bush's "compassionate" kind. He's jumped on normally Democratic issues and proselytized before black and labor groups. "I don't go to the African-American community and talk like a liberal," he says. "I go and talk like a conservative. I want to make conservatism applicable to everyone. I'm not going to shut the door or be ugly or rude or offensive to union leaders."

Thomas Fluharty

What's been unusual is Gilmore's conniving. He appointed Democratic legislators from swing districts to his administration. Republicans won all the special elections and took over the state senate.

In 1997, Gilmore's slogan was: "Education First, Then Cut Taxes." As governor, he's blunted the education issue by implementing stringent standards and regular tests, increasing school construction funding, and earmarking half the state's lottery revenues for local school boards. Despite opposition by Democrats, he enacted a five-year phaseout of Virginia's hated car tax. "Gilmore's governorship would have been destroyed had the car tax plan not been passed," says Sabato. Now, Gilmore wants to make Virginia a model of conservative governance under which cutting taxes is routine and expected.

His adherence to low taxes was tested this summer when Democrats and the state's business community clamored for a tax hike to pay for new roads and mass transit, particularly in congested northern Virginia. Gilmore says he "never" considered a tax hike. "I personally insisted we break out of the shackles of gas tax increases to fund transportation." Instead, in September, he proposed a clever scheme for new roads and commuter rail, financed chiefly out of Virginia's share of the tobacco settlement. Within a month, the traffic gridlock issue had "lost traction," the *Washington Post* declared. And so had Democratic hopes of thwarting Gilmore on November 2. ♦

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The Myth of GOP Isolationism

Don't believe the historians: It's been a century of Republican internationalism. BY DAVID FRUM

"A NEW ISOLATIONISM"—that is the motive that President Clinton attributed to the Republican senators who opposed his test-ban treaty. His slogan was echoed on the front page of the *New York Times* in a news analysis by R.W. Apple: "The Senate's decisive rejection tonight of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was the most explicit repudiation of a major international agreement in 80 years, and it further weakened the already shaky standing of the United States as a global moral leader." Soon, a whole line of parrots was squawking the same refrain.

The weapons that the test-ban treaty would condemn to obsolescence exist principally to protect America's allies. It might seem an audacious stunt for the people who want to weaken the defense of those allies to accuse those who want to continue to protect them of isolationism. But why not? For half a century, the word isolationism has been one of the most effective cudgels in the armory of Democratic political rhetoric. The journalists who write about national politics in the 1990s learned their history from books written by professors whose first political passion had been the ordeal of Woodrow Wilson and his League of Nations, and it is through the filter of that tendentious history that they understand the politics of the present.

Tom Wolfe describes in one of his essays a dispute with a left-wing German writer in the late 1960s. The German delivered an ominous warning: "The dark night of fascism is falling in the United States!" Wolfe replied that the dark night of fascism might be falling in the United States, but it seemed always to land in Germany. In the same way, while the Republican party is constantly in danger of succumbing to isolationism, it is the Democrats who consistently *have* succumbed.

What's usually omitted from the League of Nations story is the detail that Henry Cabot Lodge, the leader of the Republicans in the Senate, had favored American intervention in the First World War almost from the firing of the first gun. Woodrow Wilson and his pacifist secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan, enraged Republicans by refusing even to prepare for war. Wilson won the 1916 election by warning that a vote for the Republicans was a vote for war. Even when he himself took the country into war a month after his second inauguration, Wilson worried the Republican leadership by his willingness to contemplate a compromise peace with Germany that would have left the Allies in the lurch. At Versailles, Wilson signed two treaties—both the well-known Versailles treaty, with its attached League of Nations covenant, and also a treaty by which the United States and Britain promised to defend France if she were again attacked by Germany. Lodge made it clear to Wilson that the Senate would ratify the guarantee to France; but when the Treaty of Versailles was voted down, Wilson held back the guarantee treaty, partly out of personal spite (a noticeable trait of America's most overrated president) but also because he feared that making commitments to other countries outside the structure of his league would lead the United States . . . to intervene in European wars.

The foreign policy fights of 1919-20 thus did not principally pit interventionists against isolationists, although isolationists certainly were heard from. They pitted Republicans who trusted in American power against Democrats who trusted in treaties and moral force. Wilson's league is described in the history books as a great lost opportunity to preserve the peace of Europe. But the league could only have preserved peace if it had controlled some effective military force—and Wilson opposed the creation of such a force more adamantly than anyone. Theodore Roosevelt, by contrast, who would certainly have won the Republican presidential nomination in 1920 had he lived, favored retaining the draft and maintaining the U.S. Navy at something approximating its wartime size.

David Frum is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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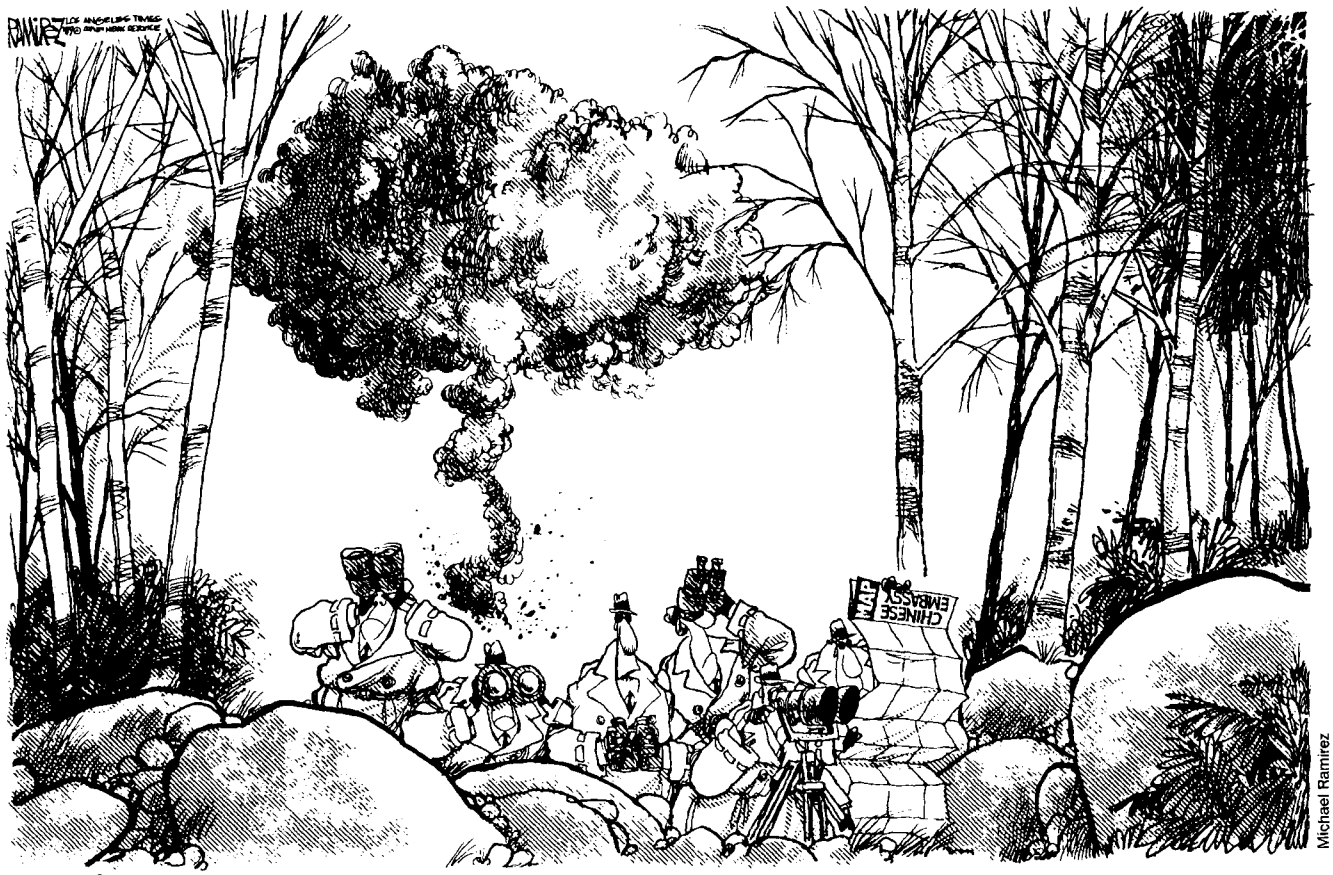
One could reprise this story again and again. Genuine isolationism has from time to time flared up inside the Republican party, as it did in 1940-41. And the traditional Republican commitment to protectionism in the decade after World War I inflicted more damage on the world economy and world peace than outright isolationism ever could have. Nevertheless, through most of this century, the main constraint on American world leadership has been the aversion of the leaders of the Democratic party to recognizing that world leadership is founded on power, not moral example. This aversion slowed American rearmament in the late 1930s, because the same Progressives who supported Franklin Roosevelt's domestic program were convinced that it was the greed of "merchants of death" that had provoked the 1914 war. And likewise, it was the Progressives' fantasies of postwar friendship with the Soviet Union that accelerated America's military build-down after 1945 and that slowed America's response to Soviet aggression and espionage for three crucial years.

This unwillingness to shoulder the responsibilities of power has come to characterize the Democratic party more and more strongly over the past three decades. Nowhere can it be seen more sharply than in the fascination with arms control that has served many Democrats as a substitute for a foreign policy idea over the past three decades, but it is on display in many other areas as well: the bugout from Indochina, the hacking at the defense budget in the 1970s, the refusal to aid the opposition to the Nicaraguan Sandinistas in the 1980s, the vote of the large majority of congressional Democrats against the Gulf War in 1991.

Since 1993, the United States has been led by a Democratic president who thinks of himself as an internationalist. To his credit, Bill Clinton is a free trader—even if by now most of his party have become thoroughly protectionist. But Clinton shares his party's proclivity for grand aspirations unbacked by force. From Haiti, through Somalia, to Iraq and Yugoslavia, this administration has again and again made commitments and threats it was never able to muster the resolve to honor or carry out.

The critique of the Clinton foreign policy has been written many times of course. And yet somehow, it never quite takes hold. The old trope of Republican isolationism and Democratic internationalism is always ready to spring to life again, despite its falsity about both past and present. The trope lies ready to use because it accords so neatly with the received ideas about the two parties that furnish most journalists' minds. And it reminds us that until the Democratic partisan historiography that still fills America's textbooks is replaced by a more independent and objective story of the nation's past, Republicans will continue to be wrongfooted by ancient myths. ♦



Michael Ramirez

BELIEVE ME, IF THERE IS ANY VIOLATION OF THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY WE'LL BE THE FIRST TO VERIFY IT...

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Arms Control: The End of an Illusion

The Cold War was won at Reykjavík. The Senate's defeat of the test ban treaty is Reykjavík II.

By Charles Krauthammer

Zbigniew Brzezinski is not alone in his judgment that the Cold War was won in 1986 at Reykjavík, though the fact that Brzezinski was President Carter's national security adviser shows that this is no partisan judgment. At Reykjavík, Ronald Reagan was offered the most sweeping arms control proposal in history. And he would have accepted it—had Mikhail Gorbachev not insisted that the price was American surrender of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Reagan walked out, stunning not just Gorbachev, but the entire American foreign policy establishment.

The importance of Reykjavík to winning the Cold War was that it kept American missile defense alive and made Gorbachev understand that nothing would stand in its way. The United States under Reagan was prepared to press its massive technological and economic advantage over the Soviet Union to achieve strategic superiority. Failing that, the United States would simply bleed the Soviets dry in any strategic competition. Reykjavík made clear to the Soviets the fate of their 70-year experiment of confrontation and military-technological competition with the West. They had long known that they were losing, but now they knew that the United States was not going to call off the game prematurely before their final defeat. After Reykjavík, the Soviet leadership took the only rational course left open to it: accommodation.

Reykjavík had an even deeper significance, however. It was not only that Reagan insisted on holding on to SDI. It is that he was willing to walk away from the ultimate in arms control, a deal that would have won him the Nobel Prize. Reagan, however, lived for something other than recognition from bow-tied European aristocrats.

What so shocked both the Soviets and the American foreign policy elite was that Reagan's tenacity on SDI was matched by his indifference to traditional arms control. He was widely denounced for having destroyed the best opportunity for peace in a generation. But Reagan did not care. He was perfectly willing to pass up a bad deal. In doing so, Reagan helped shatter the totem of arms control, the slavish devotion to the "process" that turned agreements into ends in themselves. He refused to acquiesce to the notion that rejecting any arms control agreement would necessarily produce instability.

In fact, Reykjavík led to the opposite. It paved the way for the demise of the Soviet Union and thus, ironically, for the very need for U.S.-Soviet arms control. That denouement made plain to all what arms control skeptics had been saying for a generation: that the real problem with nuclear weapons was not the weapons themselves but the intention to use them. The weapons are not self-firing. The problem is the nature of the people prepared to fire them.

After all, the Russians still have enough nuclear weapons today to destroy the United States many times over. But we don't stay up nights worrying about it. We don't make movies and television shows and novels about the coming U.S.-Russian apocalypse, as we did by the bushel during the Cold War. The Russian nuclear arsenal hardly even figures in our politics anymore. Why? The weapons are still there, but the threat is not, because the regime has changed.

The problem was always the regime, not the weapons. With Communist ideology in ruins, Russia may now be a Great Power rival, but no longer is it an immutable enemy of the United States. It was ideology, not nuclear technology, that accounted for the hair-trigger superpower crisis of 40 years. The ideology is dead. It was Reagan's willingness to defy the theology of arms control, in particular at Reyk-

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AP / Wide World Photos

Bill Clinton signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and (inset) decrying its demise in the Senate

javík, that helped bring about its demise—and the peace we enjoy today.

II

OCTOBER 13, 1999, MARKED ANOTHER MILESTONE in freeing the United States from arms control idolatry. The Senate did not just defeat, it destroyed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The treaty not only failed to command two-thirds of the Senate. It failed even to win a simple majority.

This was more than the defeat of a treaty. It was the defeat of an idea, indeed a series of ideas about nuclear weapons, about arms control, and even more generally, about the international order of parchment barriers and paper treaties that the Clinton administration has set about trying to construct during the 1990s.

It was Reykjavík II.

It is important to understand why the test ban treaty lost. The establishment press, in the most blatantly biased coverage since the nuclear freeze movement of the 1980s (the establishment press has a habit of losing both its nerve and its head when contemplating nuclear weapons), has tried to portray this vote as the result of clever timing and maneuvering. In September, Byron Dorgan (D-ND) got up on the floor of the Senate and vowed to obstruct all Senate business—"I intend to plant myself on the floor like a potted plant"—unless the test ban treaty, which had been held back for two years by Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jesse Helms, was put on the table for debate and a vote.

Meanwhile, "a handful of Republicans led by Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona had been secretly proselytizing their fellow members about the treaty" (in the hilariously conspiratorial accounting offered by the miffed *New York Times*) and neglected to tell the Democrats about their success. The Democrats thus fell into a "trap" when the Republicans acceded to the Democrats' demand and put the treaty on the calendar for a vote.

Ah, the duplicity. The Democrats complain that there was no time for debate. Time? Clinton signed the treaty in September 1996. He had three years to make his case. Where was he during all that time? If the treaty was so important to him, the country, and the world, why did he not go on television and make the case to the nation in the weeks and days before the vote?

Perhaps because the treaty is such a bad treaty. The longer it is subject to examination, the worse it looks. The CTBT is precisely the kind of arms control agreement that at first blush gets instant support. A universal test ban. What could be wrong with that?

It takes time to explain. First, no treaty should prohibit what it cannot detect. This treaty bans all nuclear explosions, but it cannot detect low-yield explosions. That means that those countries like the United States that have an open society and a free press will adhere to the treaty and test nothing, while those that do not—North Korea, Iraq, Iran, perhaps even China and Russia—will be able to conduct vital low yield-tests with impunity. As C. Paul Robinson, director of Sandia National Laboratories, testified before Congress, "If the United States scrupulously restricts itself to zero-yield while other nations may conduct experiments up to the threshold of international

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detectability, we will be at an intolerable disadvantage."

Moreover, the treaty is not just unverifiable, it is disarming. Literally. Without testing, the reliability and usability of the American nuclear arsenal will inevitably erode. Nuclear weapons are incredibly complex mechanisms made up of many parts, with a radioactive core that is bombarding the rest of the mechanism at all times. They simply cannot be relied upon over time without fixes and without testing.

The nuclear arsenal is all the more important to the United States because we have already forsworn, for good reason, chemical and biological weapons. Nuclear weapons are our only means of retaliation and deterrence. It was the threat of nuclear weapons, for example, that kept Saddam from using his chemical weapons in the Gulf War.

Administration officials protest that we have sophisticated computer programs that will substitute for testing. This claim happens to be wrong. There is great uncertainty, even in the expert nuclear community, as to whether we really can maintain confidence in the reliability of the arsenal without occasional explosions. Robinson himself testified to Congress that reliability through computer simulation is 10 to 20 years away. And that was an optimistic prediction, based on the perhaps unrealistic assumption that we will be able to replace our cadre of weapons scientists after we abolish testing.

But assume it is right that sophisticated computer programs can substitute for testing. What then is the point of the treaty? The tests are just a means. They are not atmospherically polluting, like the kind that were banned in 1963. The only purpose of banning all underground tests is as a first and inexorable step towards disarmament. The whole idea is to make nuclear weapons unreliable and unusable, as the more candid of the test ban proponents admit.

For those who claim not to want disarmament, the paradox is unanswerable: Either a test ban degrades nuclear arsenals and thus ushers in an era of nuclear disarmament, or it does not. If it does, then it is catastrophically dangerous to the United States, because our nuclear arsenal, the ultimate deterrent, is what preserves the safety of the United States and those allies that live under its nuclear umbrella.

And if it does not degrade arsenals, then what is the point? We would be banning tests simply for the sake of banning tests.

No, said the advocates. For the sake of preventing proliferation.

This shift—selling a disarmament treaty as a non-proliferation treaty—is as unconvincing as it is unsubtle. The argument is puzzling in the extreme. The CTBT does nothing to prevent the transfer of nuclear technology from one country to another, which is the essence of proliferation. It seems to be saying that other countries will be moved by the example of the United States to lay down their nukes and/or forgo developing a nuclear capacity.

But the bad guys, regimes that define themselves as enemies of the United States, will either (1) not sign the treaty, or (2) like Iraq, cheat, or (3) like North Korea with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, openly violate it when they please.

So much for our enemies. What about our friends? Here the argument for non-proliferation breaks down completely. In fact, it is the reliability and strength of the American nuclear arsenal that, if anything, deters friendly countries from seeking to acquire their own nuclear weapons. If the United States were irrevocably committed to a test ban and thus to the slow erosion of the reliability of its arsenal, our guarantee to non-nuclear friends would similarly erode. Countries like Japan and Taiwan would be more inclined to acquire their own nuclear weapons as they lost confidence in the American nuclear deterrent.

III

THAT A FATALLY FLAWED TREATY that so clearly ill-served American national security needs could have been so proudly signed by the president of the United States, so loudly declared to be essential to American security, so bitterly defended even after its defeat in the Senate, with Clinton promising to continue the fight until its ultimate ratification, tells us how strong remains the grip of arms control theology.

Which is why the defeat of an agreement of such apparent attractiveness, enjoying both popular support and fierce media allegiance, is of such potential significance. By ending a decade-long string of victories by arms control advocates, it has the potential to break the arms control spell. Why? Because its central defect perfectly illustrates the central defect of all arms control.

The enduring paradox of arms control is this: Either it does something strategically serious (such as keeping us and our enemies from destroying each other in a nuclear exchange) or it does not. If it does reduce our nuclear strength to the point where we cannot reliably destroy our opponents, then we have lost our deterrent and made the United States and the world far less safe.

On the other hand, if arms control is structured so as not to fundamentally affect our ability to eradicate, say, Russia, it has made no strategic difference. What then is the point? It might save a few dollars, but that is hardly the promise and purpose of arms control—enhanced security and safety—as presented by its advocates.

At the heart of arms control theology is the bedrock

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belief that (1) the weapons are the problem and, even more mindless, (2) the number of weapons is what matters. These were the beliefs, for example, that underlay the nuclear freeze movement of the early 1980s, a time of mass agitation fueled by near-hysteria in the mainstream media and culminating in the largest disarmament demonstration in American history (New York City, June 1982).

Its demand and central organizing principle was a freeze on all nuclear weapons. It made absolutely no sense. After all, if we were at such a nuclear precipice, why in the world would we want to freeze the situation in place? Both sides already possessed enough nuclear weaponry to destroy the other side many times over. What possible difference would it make to nuclear safety to prevent the development of new weapons that, as the freeze advocates themselves pointed out, were redundant and could do nothing more than make the rubble bounce?

The freeze only made sense if it was a first step to true nuclear disarmament—as the CTBT and almost all other nuclear arms control measures are intended to be. The central paradox again: The only point of a freeze would be to achieve such radical arms control that neither side could make the other's rubble bounce even once. But then what happens to deterrence? It would have been an infinitely more dangerous world if the United States had reduced its arsenal below the level at which it could massively retaliate against the Soviet Union.

The only kind of arms control that made sense in the bipolar era were agreements that focused not on the number of weapons but on specific types. There were two such agreements in the Reagan-Bush years. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty abolished a whole category of nuclear weapons (those of intermediate range) and forced the Soviets to dismantle the SS-20s with which they had threatened Western Europe. And the START treaties abolished land-based multiple-warhead missiles, which are particularly destabilizing because they might tempt their possessor to launch a disarming first strike in time of crisis.

The INF treaty and the START treaties marginally increased strategic safety. But only marginally, which is all that arms control, when very narrowly tailored and at its very best, can ever do. The profound sense of nuclear tranquillity that we enjoy today—the feeling that we are not, as during the first 40 years of the nuclear era, living on a hair trigger, just minutes away from Armageddon—has nothing at all to do with arms control.

Arms control at its very best seeks to alter strategic calculations and make a first strike marginally less likely. But it was not arms control that ended the nuclear crisis. It was the collapse of the Soviet empire. The Reagan-Bush arms control agreements were symptoms, rather than causes, of the relaxation of tensions that occurred as the Soviet Union began to expire.

What brought about the nuclear tranquillity of today was victory in the Cold War. And crucial to that victory was the resistance of strong leaders to the siren song of arms control. Three of the great turning points in the Cold War were Senator Henry Jackson's holding up the SALT II treaty in the late 1970s (which would, if anything, have increased the gap between U.S. and Soviet nuclear capabilities); Reagan, Thatcher, and Kohl's facing down the nuclear freeze movement and deploying intermediate-range NATO weapons in Europe; and finally Reykjavík, where Ronald Reagan walked away from the most radical arms control deal in history to pursue nuclear safety not by treaty, but by unilateral military means.

IV

MODERN NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL WAS BORN of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry. One might have expected that when that rivalry died the fervor for arms control would have died with it.

It did not. Indeed, with the return of Democrats to power in 1993, the main American foreign policy agenda has been to develop, sign, and ratify a dizzying array of new treaties—mostly multilateral, even universal—regarding chemical, biological, nuclear, and strategic defensive weapons. These include:

¶ A chemical weapons treaty that even its advocates admit is unverifiable.

¶ A biological weapons regime that would intrusively inspect American pharmaceutical operations and have no chance whatsoever of finding the small concealable plants that could produce toxins in rogue states like Libya, Iran, and Syria.

¶ The land mine treaty, which the Clinton administration was in the end forced by Pentagon pressure to refrain from signing.

¶ The ABM treaty, strengthened and multilateralized.

¶ And now the test ban.

The new theology of arms control is to promote these multilateral treaties as a way to lessen the chance of war. This involves a leap of faith even greater than that required for bilateral arms control.

First, there is the problem, to put it delicately, of compliance. Universal treaties, as Richard Perle points out, group together good guys and bad guys. The good guys, with a free press and open governments, will honor the treaties. The bad guys will not.

You would think that the arms control dreamers would have learned their lesson with Iraq and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. At the time of the Gulf War, Iraq was in excellent standing with the International Atomic

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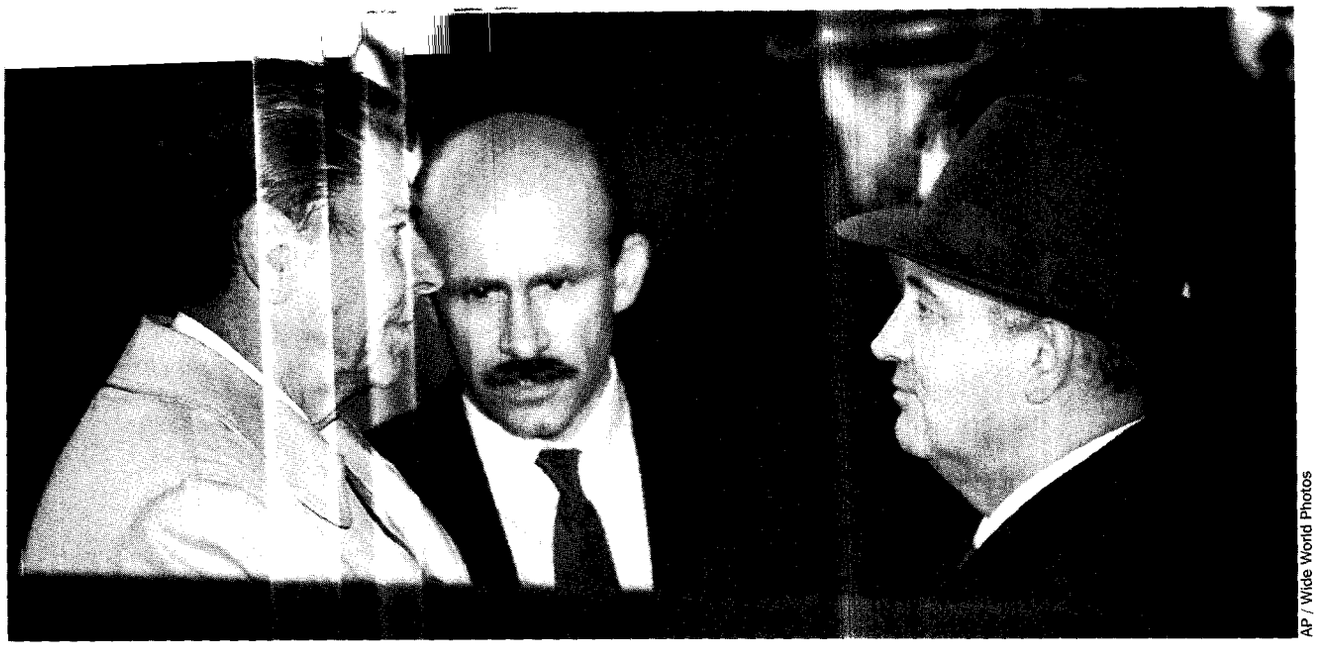

AP / Wide World Photos

Reagan staring down Gorbachev in Reykjavik, October 1986

Energy Agency (IAEA). It had signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, passed all its IAEA inspections, and been pronounced nuclear free. Indeed, Iraq was on the IAEA governing board! Had it not been for the invasion of Kuwait, we would not have known that Iraq had not one but 11 facilities involved in various aspects of its nuclear program. If not for Saddam's folly of invading Kuwait, he would have had nuclear weapons within six months—all under the IAEA's nose.

The Iraq example shows how universal treaties can actually decrease international security by creating a false sense of security. Inspectors, bureaucracies, governing boards, lofty goals, and professed norms—these are supposed to protect us from the ambitions of unappeasable rogue states. With these phony safeguards in place, the urgency to take real and often unilateral measures—whether aggressive (like Israel's attack on the Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981) or defensive (like building an ABM system)—is blunted.

And beyond compliance is the question of salience. These universal treaties and supposedly universal norms have radically different meaning for different states.

Universality assumes that all nations are equally situated. On its face, this is false. We hear, for example, that 155 nations have signed the CTBT. This number is supposed to be impressive. It is mindless. The fact that Albania, Andorra, Angola, and Antigua have signed this treaty is meaningless. (And that's just the A's.) They have no nuclear weapons to test. (Even the all-important 44 "nuclear capable" states, whose unanimous assent is required for the treaty to go into effect, include such absurdities as Colombia, Congo, and Peru.) These weapons are infinitely more important to some states than to others. Some, like Israel, may need a doomsday deterrent to prevent numerically superior enemies from overwhelming them. Some, like the United States, need a massive deterrent in order to extend a nuclear umbrella to such dependent countries as Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. Others have no nuclear needs at all.

This difference in salience manifested itself most dramatically in that great motherhood cause, the land mine treaty. Some countries don't need land mines. Others, while peace-loving and unaggressive, do. During the treaty negotiations, the prime minister of Finland became increasingly annoyed with his neighbors' posturing on the issue. Easy for them to eschew land mines. They live in safety surrounded by friends. "Do other Nordic countries want Finland to be their land mine? It is very convenient," he noted plaintively. Meaning that Sweden has a land mine—Finland—but Finland, twice invaded by Russia across an exposed 800-mile frontier, has no such buffer. Finland, hardly a rogue nation, refused to sign.

So did the United States. There are no Swedes defending South Korea from the North. It is Americans who would die in an initial North Korean attack. Different weapons have different salience for different countries. Addressing them universally is a fool's errand. Some nations, like Finland on land mines, will refuse because they need the weapons for defense. Others, like Iraq on nukes, will refuse because they want the weapons for greatness. Universal treaties should not stop the former. And they cannot stop the latter.

V

THERE IS A LARGER ISSUE STILL, however, larger than a single bad treaty like the CTBT, larger than the ideology of arms control. The test ban and arms control are part of a larger web of "interdependence"—treaties, protocols, conventions, agreements of every kind—that the liberal foreign policy establishment sees as the wave of the future and the road to global security. Not the primacy of American power. Not American deterrence. Not the alliances we

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Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev signing the ill-fated SALT II Treaty, June 18, 1979, in Vienna

dominate. Not, banish the thought, robust American defenses against the weapons of the future. But a new web of international norms on arms, trade, human rights, the environment. Pieces of paper that we all sign together, that then create by their very existence an "international community" living under universal norms.

This frenzy of paper signing is not random do-good-ism. It reflects a coherent vision of what constitutes progress in international relations. The idea is to transcend power politics with a regulated system of agreements that creates new norms, obligations, and restraints on the behavior of otherwise lawless nations—ultimately, an international system that recreates the structure of domestic civil society.

The idea is to establish an international order based not on power but on interdependence. It is not terribly new. Cordell Hull, FDR's secretary of state, anticipated it as far back as 1943 when, returning from the Moscow Conference, he said, "There will no longer be need for spheres of influence, for alliances, for balance of power, or any other of the special arrangements through which, in the unhappy past, the nations strove to safeguard their security or to promote their interests."

Hull's optimism reflected the hopes soon to be invested in the United Nations, the ultimate in universality. He could be forgiven for believing at the end of the Second World War that the transcendence of power politics was finally at hand. We who have a half-century of experience with the failures and delusions of the universalist idea—beginning but not ending with the United Nations—have no such excuse.

What norms do Zambia, France, and North Korea share? And what international authority is there to force compliance with these norms, as the police and courts do in domestic society? What is the penalty for violating these norms? North Korea threatened to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which it had signed, and build nuclear weapons. The penalty? Endless blandishments from the Clinton administration, including the promise of two multibillion-dollar nuclear reactors and a supply of free oil.

Last year, North Korea violated another norm by launching a three-stage rocket over Japan. It is now preparing to test more long-range missiles. The penalty? The Clinton administration has relaxed sanctions against North Korea in return for the promise that it will desist (for now) from launching any more long-range missiles.

In view of the unmistakable reality that these "norms" are unenforceable, the woolly internationalists have a fall-back: Parchment makes a statement. As Senator Joseph Biden explained at the opening of hearings on the chemical weapons convention, international agreements "provide us with a valuable tool." What kind? "Moral suasion of the entire international community to isolate and target those states who violate the norm."

How can serious people believe such nonsense? There is no more morally compelling norm than the prohibition against using—not just developing but using—chemical weapons. The protocol banning their use dates back to 1925. How did the "international community" respond when in 1988 Saddam Hussein attacked Kurds with chemical weapons killing 5,000 people?

It found even "moral suasion" too strenuous. It did nothing.

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A decade later, Iraq violated the "norms" imposed on it regarding the development of weapons of mass destruction. It cheated, harassed inspectors, and finally threw them out. The response of the international community? The Security Council—the international community in executive session—*loosened* the embargo on Iraqi oil.

VI

SUCH INCONVENIENCES are generally explained away as the growing pains of a new international system. The goal remains: to establish a binding network of norms to transcend power politics, to transcend narrow national interests, and ideally to transcend the nation state itself.

But such a project must necessarily bind the dominant world power more than any other. Whether consciously or unconsciously, whether out of a utopian vision or out of an enduring distrust of American power, the effect of this binding network is to restrict the freedom of action and diminish the power of the United States. After all, to achieve this vision of an international system transformed into civil society writ large, ruled by paper and not by power, the superpower must be brought to heel. American hegemony is an affront to the project. Hence the entangling web of interdependence, tying Gulliver down with a thousand strings. Who, after all, would the chemical weapons convention, the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, the land mine treaty seriously restrain? Gabon? Iran? Slovakia?

And who is restrained by the most egregiously disarming treaty of all, the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty? The ABM treaty is the repository of all the totemic properties of arms control. It was perhaps once a contributor to nuclear stability. It is now entirely obsolete, no longer even legally binding, having been contracted with a state that no longer exists. Its original purpose was to promote strategic stability and prevent an offensive weapons race between the United States and the Soviet Union. But its only effect today is to prevent the United States from building effective defenses against the real threat it faces: limited attack with weapons of mass destruction launched either deliberately by rogue states or accidentally (or without authority) by others.

The ABM treaty prevents the United States from defending itself. It has no similar effect on Russia, because Russia is incapable of building the kind of sophisticated defenses that American technology uniquely makes possible.

Yet rather than abandon the ABM treaty, the Clinton administration has actually strengthened it. In 1997, it signed an agreement in New York recognizing Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus as well as Russia as successor states to the Soviet Union for the purposes of this treaty. Which would be a meaningless provision, except that making five countries party to this treaty rather than two makes it more difficult for the United States ever to amend the treaty to allow us to build needed defenses.

The 1997 agreement also "demarcated" between the prohibited long-range ABM systems and the permitted shorter-range systems. But it did so in a way that forces us to dumb down and slow down the interceptors we want to build, by putting a ceiling on their speed and by restricting the kinds of sensory information they may use to track incoming enemy warheads. Even now, with the North Korean threat growing and with missile defense technology advancing, the Clinton administration goes hat in hand to the Russians to ask them to permit us to build the defenses we need to protect American cities.

VII

THAT IS WHY THE DEFEAT OF THE TEST BAN TREATY is so important. It is not just one treaty. It is not just puncturing the theology of arms control. It is a small detonation in the new legalist-internationalist structure that the United States has for almost a decade been imposing on itself.

The Democrats have threatened to make the test ban treaty a campaign issue. Republicans should welcome the opportunity. Of course, a 15-second sound bite can make a test ban sound lovely. But even a 30-second sound bite suffices to make the counterargument that the treaty is unverifiable and, for the United States, disarming. A debate, moreover, could illuminate the various other ways that the Clinton administration has, with its fetish for treaties, constrained American power and constricted American freedom of action to the detriment of national security.

If the Democrats want to make the safety of American citizens an issue, they should be taken on. What will make your children sleep more safely in their beds: a treaty signed by Iran and Iraq, or the kind of missile just tested in the Pacific that shot an incoming warhead out of the sky at a combined speed of 15,000 miles per hour?

November 9 marks the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. There will be many speeches and much celebration. Let us ask the Clinton administration, the proponents of the CTBT, and the architects of the new era of universal arms control to tell us how the wall was brought down by SALT I or SALT II or the ABM treaty. The fact is that it was brought down not by paper but by steel and technology, by an arms race and an iron will.

The challenge to American security today does not require an iron will—we do not face that level of risk or require the same resolve. But it does require a clear head—the ability to see through the illusions of arms control and the courage to resist the lure of parchment. ♦

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THE LOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY

By James M. Buchanan
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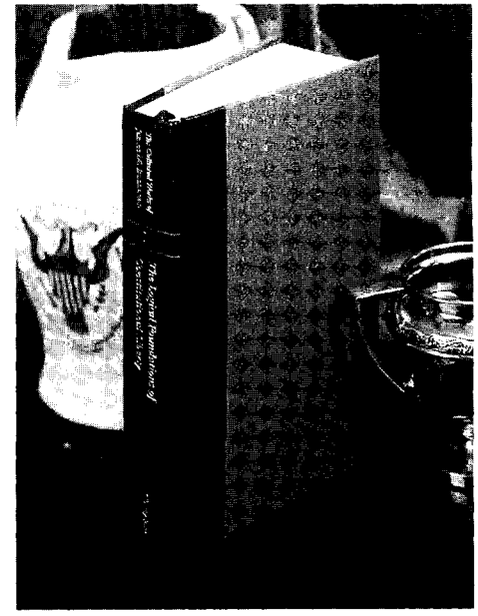

The thirty-one papers presented in this volume offer scholars and general readers alike a comprehensive introduction to the work of one of the greatest economists of the modern era. Many of the most important essays by James M. Buchanan are gathered in this inaugural volume of the forthcoming twenty-volume edition of his ***Collected Works***. The essays are arranged thematically and so present a complete perspective on Buchanan's work. The six sections include "Introduction," "Politics without Romance," "Public Finance and Democratic Process," "The Economist and Economic Order," "Ethics and Economics," and "The Reason of Rules." The editors have focused on papers that Buchanan has written without collaboration and which present Buchanan's earlier, classic statements on crucial subjects rather than his subsequent elaborations. (The elaborations will appear in later volumes in the series.) Included, too, is Buchanan's Nobel address, "The Constitution of Economic Policy," and the text of the Nobel Committee's press release explaining why Buchanan was awarded the prize for Economics in 1986. The volume also includes Buchanan's autobiographical essay, "Better Than Plowing," in which he gives not only a brief account of his life, but also his own assessment of what is important, distinctive, and enduring in his work. The Foreword—by all three of the series editors—will be valuable to all readers who wish to engage the challenging but epochal writings of the father of modern "public choice theory."

Geoffrey Brennan is a Professor of Social and Political Theory at the Australian National University's Research School of Social Sciences and co-author of *Democracy and Decision: The Pure Theory of Electoral Preference.*

Hartmut Kliemt is the author of *Papers on Buchanan and Related Subjects* and a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Duisburg, Germany.

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Success Story

Why *Harry Potter* is the Ultimate Children's Tale

BY J. BOTTUM

Photos: Scholastic Books

A writer who puts one cliché into a book manages to produce pulp fiction. A writer who uses a dozen can produce a classic. And a writer who includes them all—well, only Homer has ever managed that. Something very interesting begins to happen in literature when the standard, hackneyed old tropes and figures are jumbled up together and allowed to start pushing and shoving among themselves.

The publishing event of 1999 has been the appearance this fall of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, the third installment of the British author J.K. Rowling's promised seven-volume saga of the adventures of a bespectacled boy at a wizard-training school in England. It is, in fact, the publishing event of the decade. On a visit last week to a Washington bookstore, Joanne Rowling sold and signed nine hundred copies of the novel in a single sitting. The book has not just topped the bestseller lists, but dominated them. It's sold almost a million copies in just a few weeks, at one point outselling the second-best-selling novel by an astonishing margin of seven to one. It's called back onto both the hardback and the paperback top-ten lists its predecessors, the 1997 *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and the 1998 *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. And for two weeks, Rowling had the nearly unbelievable distinction of the top three bestselling hardback novels in America *and* the top two paperbacks.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
by J.K. Rowling
Scholastic, 435 pp., $19.95

Part of the reason for Rowling's triumph is the success that follows from success. The huge sales in 1997 of Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* were proof that there still exists in America a hunger for middlebrow fiction—and for the shared topic of conversation that is the main benefit of a middlebrow literary culture. The trashy bestsellerdom of the lowbrow may be shared, but it gives us nothing to talk about. The glossy unbestsellerdom of the highbrow may give us something to talk about, but it isn't shared. Once a middlebrow book reaches a certain number of readers, however, it begins to feed upon its success to gain ever higher success—for its *sharedness* has become its most important feature.

And then, too, the *Harry Potter* books are children's fiction, and the one thing that's stronger than the manifest desire of middlebrow adults in America to have shared literary references is their hunger to have their children have shared literary references. You can feel good about buying

J. Bottum is Books & Arts editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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it for your kids, and you can read it yourself in an evening and talk about it around the office coffee machine with the other parents for the next two weeks.

But the deeper reason for the success of *Harry Potter* is Rowling's willingness to pour into the cauldron of her books the tropes and figures of nearly *every* genre of children's fiction and let them stew together. As the saga opens in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, a thin eleven-year-old boy with round glasses and a scar shaped like a lightning bolt on his forehead is living in Little Whinging, in the London suburbs, with his respectability-obsessed aunt and uncle and their fat son Dudley.

From the first sentence, even moderately unread children will know just where in literature they are: "Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much." (Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, isn't it?)

The Dursleys have been stuck with Harry ever since his parents died when he was one year old, but—for reasons they never make clear to Harry—they don't like it, and they have spent the last ten years trying to bludgeon out of him some fault that the poor orphan doesn't know he has: "Harry was used to spiders," Rowling introduces the boy, "because the cupboard under the stairs was full of them, and that was where he slept." (Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, anyone?)

But things are about to change in Harry Potter's life. It turns out that hidden in the byways and secret places of England's green and pleasant land is a parallel world that has gone on unnoticed all this time. (Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, yes?) It is a strange and marvelous world of magicians and magical creatures who cannot be perceived by the ordinary, unchosen folk. (Wasn't that P.L. Travers's *Mary Poppins*?)

It's this world of magic in which Harry travels (Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*) by passing through a magic portal (C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*) at Platform Nine and Three-Quarters in London's King's Cross Station (well, I don't know, maybe E. Nesbit's *The Railway Children*), after receiving a mysterious letter inviting him to attend the "Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry; Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster" (a touch of L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*) that frightens the Dursleys and briefly makes them treat Harry better (Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Little Princess*).

J.K. Rowling

As it turns out, in this new world, the insignificant Harry suddenly discovers himself to be a significant figure (T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone*). His parents had been battling the Dark Lord Voldemort (Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*), and Harry is famous among witches and wizards, for he survived as an infant the attack that killed his parents—and in surviving, somehow destroyed Voldemort's power. So off he goes to the Hogwarts boarding school (Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays*), where he forms a mischievous triumvirate of new friends (Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky & Co.*) and discovers an enormous talent for the "basketball on broomsticks" school game of Quidditch (P.G. Wodehouse's *Mike and Psmith*). But in each book he must face the horror of Voldemort's threat to return to power (J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*), and the series promises to follow Harry Potter through his seven years of schooling, as he ages from eleven to eighteen (Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* series).

Along the way in the three *Harry Potter* volumes Rowling has produced so far, we encounter a huge cast of stock figures. There's the poor but happy Weasley family—straight out of Margaret Sidney's *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew*. There's Neville, the little boy for whom everything goes wrong—from Lucretia P. Hale's *The Peterkin Papers*. There's Hermione, the smart girl surrounded by uncomprehending boys—borrowed out of Louisa May Alcott's *Eight Cousins*. There's Hagrid, the loveable giant; and Malfoy, the evil-natured rich boy; and Snape, the jealous teacher; and Percy, the pompous prefect—and on and on they roll past, each more familiar than the last.

The result is entirely enjoyable. Rowling may lack the perfect diction of A.A. Milne and Lewis Carroll, but she still has a great deal of fun with words: the invented slang (*Muggles* for non-magical people), the pseudo-Latin spells (*Petrificus Totalus!*), the almost meaningful place names (*Gryffindor*, *Slytherin*, *Hufflepuff*, and *Ravenclaw*, the four houses that make up Hogwarts school), and the proper names that tell the reader from the start just which cliché their holders are going to fill (the fat, unpleasant boy, *Dudley Dursley*; the suspected betrayer of Harry's parents, *Sirius Black*).

Rowling may lack as well the inventiveness of Mark Twain or Robert Louis Stevenson—her first two books have essentially the same plot, and only with *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* do we get a variation. But she knows how to keep her stories moving, just as she knows how to set in them her little touches of comic observation and sometimes quite frightening terror. But, best of all, she knows how to fill her stories with all the most standard, hackneyed, old tropes and figures—and then how to get out of the way to let them perform their magic. ♦

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Wishful Thinking

Daphne Patai and Thomas Sowell Contemplate the Ruins of Utopianism. BY NOEMIE EMERY

It would take a young person with a heart of stone to look on the world and its grievous inequalities—the undeserved wealth and unmerited hardships; the children born with more than three strikes against them—and not think the government should do something about it. But then over the next ten or twenty years, such a young person may learn, sadly and slowly, that some of what the state does to relieve injustice not only fails to make things better, but frequently makes them very much worse. In fact, it seems to be a rule that the vaster the reform the state attempts, the more specific the drive to make all things perfect, the more hellish will be the result.

Heterophobia
Sexual Harassment and the Politics of Purity
by Daphne Patai
Rowman & Littlefield, 277 pp., $25

The Quest for Cosmic Justice
by Thomas Sowell
Free Press, 256 pp., $25

Two recent books dovetail quite neatly to dissect and destroy the utopian fancy. Conservative economist and provocateur Thomas Sowell's *The Quest for Cosmic Justice* takes the sweeping overview, while *Heterophobia* by Daphne Patai shows how this works in one special instance, the Orwellian realm of what she calls the sexual harassment industry.

Sowell starts by conceding the lure of utopian visions, which are eternal and everywhere: Who does not want a world that is better than this? Like most conservatives, he freely admits that some have too much and some have too little; that few of the rich "deserve" their good fortune; and that a man from a deprived and abusive background may show more merit in achieving a modest measure of success than a man from a rich, loving, and privileged family who goes on to a brilliant career. He would not mind, he says, seeing disparities leveled, merit rewarded, and the honest poor given more money and benefits, preferably at the expense of some robber baron's arrogant brats. Then, why doesn't he want a state that can make these things happen?

Two reasons spring to mind. First, no human agency can accurately determine the degrees of merit, much less assign them a worth in material benefits. And second, a government that could both rate people this way and assign goods accordingly would be not only far too intrusive for anyone's safety, but also much too open to corruption and abuse. Yet in spite of these fatal drawbacks, people keep trying. As Sowell makes clear, the Left's agenda from the late sixties onward has been utopian, our national politics a succession of bouts between the "cosmic" and "traditional" concepts of justice, between the utopian and realistic views of life.

The distinctions he draws are detailed and emphatic. Traditional justice lives in the world that exists, and tries to keep order in it. Cosmic justice attempts to transform it. Traditional justice treats all people alike, regardless of circumstance. Cosmic justice has different standards for different classes of people, trying to compensate for prior injustice, often years in the past. Traditional justice is equal pay for equal work, regardless of whether the work is done by whites or non-whites, women or men. Cosmic justice is "comparable worth" (often a ploy to boost earnings of women), which makes different jobs appear equal, depending on what someone thinks they are worth.

Traditional justice might encourage schools to expand their sports programs for women, a laudable enterprise. Cosmic justice is Title IX, which demands that expenses for men's sports and women's be rigorously equal, in spite of the huge gap in demand and interest. Traditional justice is the old civil rights laws, which mandate equal treatment for everyone. Cosmic justice is affirmative action, which mandates different rules for different classes of people, to make up for detriments that cannot be measured and tend to differ from person to person. (Sowell would be perfectly willing to recompense slaves at the expense of slaveholders and traders. Unfortunately, as he reminds us, these souls are long dead.) A quintessential example of cosmic justice in action is the Clinton administration's awarding contracts to construction firms headed by minority owners on the basis of the number of minority contractors who would have been in business in the absence of prior patterns of segregation. A still further form of cosmic justice is jury nullification, in which a jury purposely lets off a guilty man solely because innocent men of his racial description were wrongly convicted in the past. In cosmic terms, this purports to bring about some weird sort of "balance." In traditional terms, it is a new travesty, as one more guilty man goes free.

Prone to corruption and vagueness and overkill, cosmic justice can never be cosmic enough. A preference system geared to redress injustices caused by racial bias fails in its mission if it does not at the same time consider the disadvantages to innocent people caused by poverty, family breakdown, or social class. In cosmic terms, is the black child raised by intelligent people in a stable, loving two-parent household with ready access to books and museums more deserving of an academic preference than the white child raised in a slum by dysfunctional parents, who had to bring up his siblings himself?

A frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *Noemie Emery is a writer living in Alexandria, Virginia.*

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"This is a raw and courageous book that turns over some rocks and shows what is crawling underneath. It reveals the ugly reality behind the pretty and politically correct words and visions of our time."
—Thomas Sowell

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As we speak, lawsuits are being brought to settle this question, but it is obvious that a system of "justice" weighted only for race is not "inclusive" enough. True cosmic justice would take into account the nuanced ethnic composition of this country. This is not a fixed, but a fluid, society, in which types defy classification. There are a few large majority groupings, such as "white" and "Christian," but when one breaks these down into sects and nationalities, everyone turns out to be a member of some kind of minority, surrounded and outnumbered by ancestral enemies, with persecution in his past. There are few settled classes of villains and victims, but successions and layers of immigrants, most of whom were badly treated by people who got here before them, and most of whom, as they assimilated, joined the others in mistreating those who came after. Thus, a really complete form of justice, that tried to make up for the damage done by segregation and slavery, would also offer compensation (smaller, of course, but carefully calibrated) for the infamous NINA (No Irish Need Apply) signs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and for the prejudice that kept Italians and Jews out of the best schools and companies, denied them housing in the better neighborhoods, and otherwise impaired their material prospects. Our mongrelized gene pool would not make this easier. Someone like Senator John Kerry, descended from both Irish Catholic immigrants and the WASP Brahmins who made their lives miserable, would end up paying reparations to himself.

But true cosmic justice would not stop even here. Sowell calls "windfalls" such things as looks, brains, charm, health, emotional balance, the people one happens to live with, and the advantages one's parents are able and willing to give. In cosmic terms, these assets too are unfair and must therefore be balanced. But this gets tricky, as good and bad luck can accrue to the same person. John Kennedy was born gifted, good looking, and outlandishly charming, to privileged parents who were eager to pull strings and spend millions to further his prospects. He was also in perpetual pain and plagued with numerous life-threatening illnesses; he was of draft age in the worst war in history and nearly died in the service; he grew up with a retarded sister; and he lost his last child weeks before he was shot to death at forty-six. Was he unfairly favored, or unfairly burdened? Well, yes. What is cosmic justice to make of such a story? How would one adjust Kennedy's blend of good and bad fortune to achieve it? How would perfect fairness "balance" his fortunes and make his fate cosmically "just"?

"Feminism has always had grandiose ideas about improving the human lot," writes Daphne Patai. A feminist and longtime college teacher of utopian writings, she has watched in something like horror as the movement has taken harassment law—originally, a much needed measure—in the direction of not one, but two utopian visions. First, harassment law became the tool that the anti-male wing of the feminist movement used to suppress, censor, and eventually criminalize innocent expressions of heterosexual interest (hence the book's title). And second, harassment law turned a legitimate right—the right to be free of coercion or undue pressure from powerful people—into an extreme and novel one, the right to be free, at all times, in all places, from any signal one might consider annoying.

Feminism gave us a new level of social compulsion, a plea for protection not from specific illegal acts, but from life itself.

For that first point, Patai cites the strand of feminist thinking that views heterosexuality as an artificial construct maliciously foisted on women for purposes of social control; sees all men as potential predators; and views any small sign of male sexual interest as step one in a rising continuum of increasing aggression, ending in rape and murder. "It is the nature of feminism, as of all other social movements, to propose ever more expansive definitions of problems over which it seeks to arouse public outrage," Patai informs us. "One does not draw public attention to an issue by declaring it to be only peripheral to most people's lives." Hence, the attempt to criminalize small matters of everyday life. Aided by laws that are purposely cloudy, and by accusations that rest on what someone perceives to have happened, harassment charges have provided a bonanza for the growing army of experts and counselors who live to plant feelings of grievance, while feminist radicals have found in these codes a singular opening to push their bizarre view of life upon the world. Thus, Patai says, "lawsuits about matters that would have seemed ludicrous a few years ago have now become commonplace. . . . A professor's encouraging words . . . can be retroactively interpreted as 'grooming' for sexual demands at a later time . . . a metaphor that happens to strike some student the wrong way can be claimed to have created a hostile environment . . . An offhand remark or misperceived gesture can threaten an entire career."

It is typical of cosmic justice that its laws are indefinite, so no one knows in advance what will be deemed criminal. As Sowell complains, "An employer cannot avoid a charge of racial discrimination merely by treating all employees and all job applicants alike. . . . 'Disparate impact' statistics will help determine after the fact whether the employer's conduct is judged to be discriminatory." Likewise, no one is sure now what may later be seen as harassment and thus cause for a lawsuit or firing. The result is a climate Patai describes as one of "freezing fear," a fear of flirtation and courtship in some schools and offices. It goes without saying that this is not a climate most women would see as utopian, but the feminists who drive this draconian project seem to see it as ideal.

"There isn't any need for a civilized man to bear anything that's seriously

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unpleasant," Patai quotes Aldous Huxley in his anti-utopian novel *Brave New World*. This is a purely utopian concept, and it is the assumption the harassment industry has now reached. Harassment law means, Patai says, "the right to be free from feeling uncomfortable," and she tracks the descent from legal offenses (assault; threats used to extort sex from women) down to "that nebulous and endlessly negotiable category of unwelcome looks, comments, gestures, and even opinions . . . into which virtually all workplace and academic interactions can be made to fit."

This is a wholly new level of social compulsion, a plea for protection not from specific illegal actss, but from life itself: "from the messiness and possible unpleasantness of everyday human interactions, from disappointment and bitterness . . . from unsuccessful sexual encounters; from work environments filled with the tensions of people still capable of having private selves." Who would not want to be granted such safeguards?

Patai herself. She has, as she writes, been subject to acts now defined as harassment: She was pursued over years by a male boss, a male professor, and one female student; there were gropes on the subway; rude words and put-downs from male students and colleagues; obscene words said on the street. She disliked these events and would have wished to avoid them, except that the price is too high. She too, she admits, has made "unwanted advances." She and her friends trailed male professors on campus, made up reasons to go to their offices and to direct the conversation to personal topics.

She too has said things that offended others, sent men invitations they might not have wanted, been angry and hurt when turned down. These memories checked her utopian visions: A state big enough to protect her from others would have spied on and restricted her. The psychic cost of living in a police state would outweigh the annoyance of the odd pass or insult, which, as she says, is not all that common. Utopian dreams are not worth the cost of repression. "It seems to me that except for egregious offenses . . . the petty annoyance of occasional misplaced sexual attention or sexist put-downs has to be tolerated. Why? Because the type of vigilance necessary to inhibit it would create a social climate so unpleasant, and ultimately so repressive, that the cure would be worse than the disease."

Balancing the cure and the ailment remains the big problem. "Unlike God at the dawn of Creation, we cannot simply say 'Let there be Justice,'" asserts Thomas Sowell. "We cannot simply say 'Do something' whenever we are morally indignant, while disdaining to consider the costs entailed." Patai would have liked to be spared some

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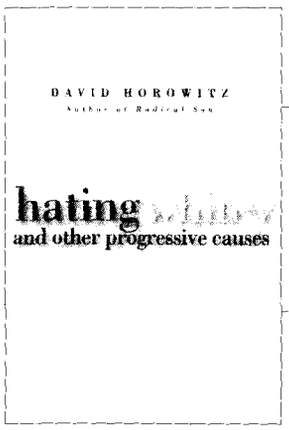

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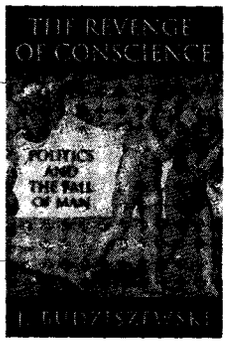

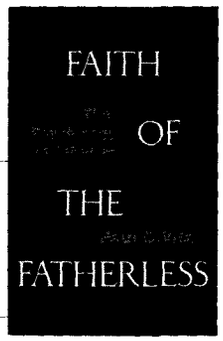

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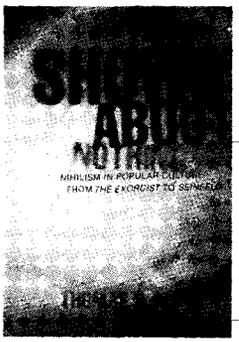

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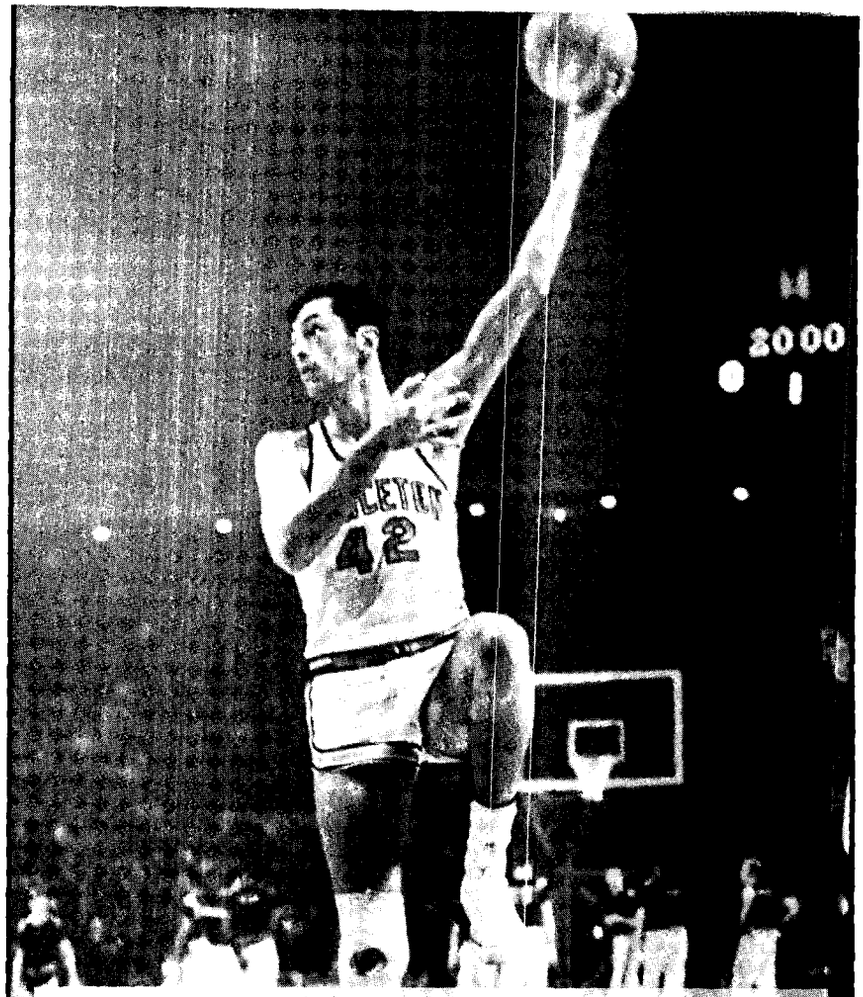
insults and attentions, but finds a police state more unattractive still. This is not the only case of a remedy worse than the problem. Attempts to cure income disparities through heavy taxation often impair the economy. Attempts to end privilege often transfer it to those charged with eradicating it, while somehow leaving less of everything to go around.

The people who designed Title IX think women should be more like men (and want to be wrestlers) and created a program to reflect this delusion. In real life, it has led to the nationwide axing of sports teams for men and the end of many scholarships for poor and minority students. Quotas and busing and set-asides have revived racism where it was dying and created it where it had never existed. And the greatest example of utopian backlash has been the near-destruction of the urban public school system, as middle class parents fled to the suburbs and private schools to avoid having their children bused into the slums. Cosmic big thinkers called these people bigots, and maybe some of them were. But most were simply acting like parents, fleeing misguided utopian projects that were too far removed from this world.

People, of course, can sometimes do good, and they ought to keep trying. The problem arises when they go too far, moving from a quest for traditional justice into cosmic overkill; trying not to improve the world, but to remake it completely, overnight. Harassment law was fine when it attacked real abuses, not the odd wink or comment. Affirmative action was fine when it was outreach and training, without compelling quotas and preferences. Busing was fine when it meant voluntary transfers of students out of bad schools and terrible neighborhoods. It became a disaster—and a political deathtrap—when it became the forced transfer of middle-class children to slums.

The Greeks understood where overreaching leads, a lesson these authors are trying to teach us. Cosmic justice is the province of God, who alone understands it. Mortal men must make do with this earth. ♦



Dollar Bill

A Portrait of the Candidate as a Young Man. BY JONATHAN V. LAST

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

In 1962 the young writer John McPhee went to watch Bill Bradley play a freshman basketball game at Princeton. It was love at first sight. McPhee wrote a long profile of Bradley for the *New Yorker* and then went to work on a book about the boy. The result, *A Sense of Where You Are*, has been continuously in print since 1965 and has now been reprinted with a 1999 addendum. It's as embarrassing today as it was thirty-five years ago.

A Sense of Where You Are
A Profile of Bill Bradley at Princeton
by John McPhee
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 144 pp., $25

Hagiographies are dangerous to everyone involved—but especially the subject. His real virtues can get lost in his attempt to live up to the ones the writer ascribed to him. And think how especially dangerous that is when the subject is only twenty years old. McPhee begins by talking about his own father, a man hard to impress. In fact, McPhee says, "I had never heard him actually make a direct statement of praise about any athlete." McPhee himself has no such problem. After watching Bradley play for five minutes, the author calls him "the most graceful and classical basketball player who had ever been near Princeton." "It seemed to me that I had been watching all the possibilities of the game that I had ever imagined, and then some," he continues. Then McPhee says Bradley is "among the better players, amateur or professional, in the history of the sport." And that's all before page thirteen.

Jonathan V. Last is a reporter at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Later McPhee calls Bradley "good-looking" and says he "is more interesting to watch before a game than most players are in play." As a matter of basketball, of course, McPhee is wrong. Bradley was an excellent college player who became an above-average professional. Since the 1950s, there has been a curious and unspoken inversion of affirmative action in basketball, not unmixed with racism. White players are often overrated and overpaid. Bradley was the highest paid player in the NBA his rookie year, making four times what his New York Knicks teammate Walt Frazier was paid. He went on to average eight points per game.

But on the other hand, as a white kid with a Rhodes scholarship, he sold tickets. Fans felt they could identify with white players, and it is this same impulse—the need to see oneself in an athlete—that tied McPhee to Bradley. After all, McPhee was a smart Princeton grad too, and seeing Bradley out on the floor must have made him feel it was all right to be an intelligent white guy. When they first met, McPhee was thirty-two and Bradley twenty. McPhee promptly moved to Princeton. To read his book is to be profoundly unsettled by the picture of a grown man panting after a boy, wanting so to be his friend.

If McPhee had merely overpraised Bradley's athletic abilities, his book would be unremarkable. The pernicious part of *A Sense of Where You Are* is McPhee's thesis that Bradley is a great athlete because he is a superior person. He writes that Bradley "is easily the most widely admired student on the campus and probably the best liked." "One effect that Bradley has had on Princeton," he adds, "has been to widen noticeably the undergraduate body's tolerance for people with high ethical standards."

It gets worse: "I have asked all sorts of people who know Bradley, or know about him, what they think he will be doing when he is forty. A really startling number of them, including teachers, coaches, college boys, and even journalists, give the same answer: 'He will be the governor of Missouri.' The chief dissent comes from people who look beyond the stepping stone of the Missouri State House and calmly tell you that Bradley is going to be president." It wasn't just McPhee, either. In a *New York Post* column, Leonard Shecter wrote, "In twenty-five years or so our presidents are going to have to be better than ever. It's nice to know that Bill Bradley will be available." The only criticism McPhee ever offers is that Bradley has a "mania for throwing the ball to his teammates"—that he is just *too* unselfish as a player.

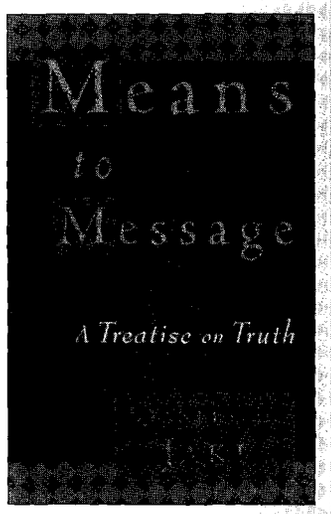
Bradley may have been the most famous college student in American history—profiles in magazines, speaking engagements all over the world, a book

Means *to* Message

A Treatise on Truth

STANLEY L. JAKI

EVERY PHILOSOPHY IS A MESSAGE. For conveying that message there has to be a tangible means, such as a book. Therefore, for the sake of a minimum of consistency, the philosopher's message or system should account in full for the reality of the means.



This new book by Stanley L. Jaki aims at unfolding the consequences of this minimum for the main topics of philosophy. The necessary first topic is the objective reality of the means, or in general "objects." Any neglect of this will result, Jaki argues, in philosophical sleights of hand that endlessly breed one another. Jaki then removes some misconceptions about clarity, as usually identified with science, and demonstrates that science as such cannot account for the reality of the means that carries its message.

In keeping in focus the priority of the means over the message, Jaki takes up such further topics as free will, purpose, causality, change, and the mind. He thereby prepares the ground for discussing the universe, ethics, God, and miracles. Finally, he deals with history and with the question of whether human beings are alone in the universe.

An important corrective to much of the work currently taking place in the field of philosophy, *Means to Message* provides a rigorous, highly original presentation of the claim that any consistent philosophical message must be steeped in a realist epistemology that is fully open to metaphysics.

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written about him, a general sense that he was the second coming of Pericles. And here's the curious thing the reader comes to realize after reading the 1999 edition of *A Sense of Where You Are*: All that relentless adoration of Bill Bradley all those years ago finally rendered him incapable of doing anything. His favorite issue as a politician has been race, and for twenty years now he has talked about how dear racial issues are to him. On the surface it seems genuine: Unlike most white men in public life, he has a lot of black friends. But while Bradley always talks about leading Americans out of racial darkness, he has never really had anything to say—he has never been able to push himself to articulate things that might make some people dislike him.

Today, Bradley is a paragon of self-proclaimed virtue. He left the Senate in 1996, claiming that "politics was broken," though, of course, he's now running for president. He says, "I believe that justice is what the Democratic party stands for," while he staunchly opposed Clinton's impeachment. Asked why he should be president, what vision he has for America, he responds, "I think my leadership would improve the quality of life." In the nineteenth century, it was famously said of Henry Adams that he didn't want to be president so much as he wanted everyone else to want him to be president. And when he found out that politics is dirty, he withdrew in disgust. The same was said in the 1950s of Adlai Stevenson, who soldiered on through the muck, driven by an ever more perfect moral vanity. And if truth be told, there's more than a little Adlai Stevenson in Bill Bradley. He wants so badly for us to admire him for his stand on something that he has never quite been able to make up his mind what it is he's going to stand for.

In college, Bradley's team never won the big game. In the 1964-1965 season, his Princeton squad played the number-one team in the country, the University of Michigan, led by Cazzie Russell. Bradley fouled out and Michigan won. The two teams would meet again in the Final Four. Bradley fouled out, again. Princeton lost, again. In basketball, as in politics, reality trumps myth. As metaphors go, it's a compelling one. ♦

Humanism and Its Discontents

The Boston Life and Boston Times of Charles Eliot Norton. BY CHRISTOPHER SHANNON

The Liberal Education of Charles Eliot Norton
by James Turner
Johns Hopkins University Press, 507 pp., $45

"It is hard to live in a land declining in civilization. . . . I can understand the feeling of a Roman as he saw the Empire breaking down, & civilization dying out." The latest cranky, conservative entry into the culture wars? No. Rather, the opening salvo of those wars, launched some one hundred years ago by the leading "liberal" intellectual of late-Victorian America, Charles Eliot Norton.

In *The Liberal Education of Charles Eliot Norton*, James Turner, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame, presents a comprehensive, authoritative account of a nearly forgotten figure who almost single-handed invented "Western Civilization" as an organizing principle for liberal arts education in the United States. Even as Norton's heirs in academia have abandoned Western Civilization for multiculturalism, they have remained true to his insistence on the centrality of education to the maintenance of a democratic polity, and the centrality of educators as arbiters of culture over the rival claims of politicians and religious leaders. A scholarly biography primarily concerned with placing Norton in relation to his own times, Turner's book nonetheless provides serious material for reflection on the tangled histories of the political and intellectual assumptions that underlie today's culture wars.

Christopher Shannon is research associate at the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism.

Charles Eliot Norton was born on November 16, 1827, into a wealthy Boston merchant family. With New England roots back to the seventeenth century, the early-nineteenth-century Nortons lived off investments and had the luxury to choose the degree of involvement they wished to have in the day-to-day world of business. Charles's father, Andrews, lived the life of a gentleman scholar, assuring that Charles would grow up surrounded by books and instilled with a love of learning. Not that it would have been different had Andrews been less scholarly. In the richly textured opening chapters, Turner presents the ideal world of the "New England Clerisy," equally at ease with commerce and culture, capable of harmonizing all seeming oppositions through hard work, moderation in personal habits, and faith in the one, true, rational religion of Unitarian Boston—a small "world of black-frock-coated gentlemen and their silk-robed ladies" and "commodious homes" with mahogany spiral staircases and Palladian windows. Turner presents this world as a dense, almost incestuous network of near and distant cousins, the legacy of generations of carefully crafted commercial alliances sealed through marriage. For all its idealism, the New England Clerisy drew its cohesion "not so much from a shared worldview . . . as from a shared world."

Charles felt completely at home in this world, and remained loyal to it even after he had grown to question certain elements of it. Like most young men of his social class, Charles attended Har-

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Johns Hopkins University Press

Right, Charles Eliot Norton in 1861. Above, thirty years later in his study.

vard, and even apprenticed in a counting house following his graduation. But like his father and an increasing number of the scions of merchant wealth, Charles began to tip the delicate Unitarian balance in favor of culture. In 1849 he oversaw a trade shipment for the company of Bullard & Lee—merely to explore the culture of India. He followed this voyage with a tour of Europe, where he began a life-long love affair with Renaissance Italy. Turner's book is particularly impressive in its portrait of the elite transatlantic social network that sustained Norton throughout these travels; the young man was able to sail the world and never really leave Boston.

Upon his return in 1851, Norton began to devote himself increasingly to cultural matters. He soon took over editorship of the *North American*, the leading American intellectual publication of its day. But he realized that the times required a new format to reach a general intellectual reading public, and he found it in the *Atlantic Monthly*, contributing to its inaugural issue in 1857, and the *Nation*, which he founded, along with E. L. Godkin, in 1865. Norton gained the friendship and respect of the leading figures of Anglo-American intellectual life, including James Russell Lowell, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Carlyle, and John Ruskin; the Carlyle and Ruskin families turned to Norton when it came to editing their correspondence for publication. Throughout this period, he continued to write and lecture on the poetry of Dante and art of the Renaissance. In 1873, he accepted an offer of a professorship from his cousin, Harvard president Charles Eliot. At Harvard, he developed the first course in art history taught in the United States. As an extension of his art-historical concerns, he established the Archaeological Institute of America, which laid the foundation for archaeology as a professional discipline in the United States.

On one level, Norton's achievements appear fairly modest in comparison with those of his better known friends and acquaintances. Still, his efforts in art history and archaeology were at the heart of a major intellectual transformation that is in large part responsible for our seeing Carlyle, Ruskin, and Emerson as important figures. Historians of education have long acknowledged the significance of the shift from the classical curriculum of the antebellum college to the more practical, professional curriculum of the modern university. The great contribution of Turner's book lies in its examination of the flipside of this development: the rise of the impractical, yet somehow edifying disciplines that have come to be grouped under the "humanities." The word itself did not exist in the English language until the late nineteenth century; it represents not a residue of the old curriculum rescued from a rising tide of professionalism, but a new understanding of ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual truth invented as an alternative to vocational philistinism.

Raised a Unitarian, Norton had few imposing dogmas to wrestle with as a youth, but he eventually came to consider even theism too confining: "Charles had heard from youth the saga of man's long ascent from papist superstition to Unitarian light. Why should enlightenment stop with Unitarianism?" What appears in retrospect as a natural progression nonetheless struck "believing" Unitarians of the time as apostasy.

Turner's study of Norton's life raises broader intellectual questions that fall beyond the proper scope of a biographical study. As is perhaps inevitable with biography, the individual serves as a microcosm for his times. True to his historical subject, Turner tells Norton's sto-

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ry very much as the man himself would have; his progression from Unitarianism to agnostic humanism appears as the natural evolution of thought in his class and time. The book's views of education appear much like Norton's: The grammar-grinding Latin and Greek that constituted antebellum education had to go, but the modern university must be on guard against excessive specialization.

Still, the book is likely to leave its readers with the opposite feeling: The modern university should be on guard against "the humanities," in either their Western or multicultural mode, and reevaluate the place of languages in the curriculum. Norton's rationale for the shift from language to literary criticism assumed a transparency of truth that his medieval predecessors would have thought absurd; recent history has sided with the medievals against the Victorians. The conflict of interpretations requires adjudication by an authority clearly lacking in modern universities. Languages provide the next best thing to such authority: the agreed-upon standards of grammar. "Values" and "respect for diversity" would both be better served by the teaching of Greek and Sanskrit than by the teaching of either Plato in translation or autobiographies of Asian-American women.

Neither what passes for Western or non-Western culture these days can resuscitate the vapid humanism that structures even the most advanced curriculum of "humanities"—and once confidence in humanism had decayed, America's universities ought to have junked that Victorian structure as completely as they junked its Victorian content. James Turner's life of Charles Eliot Norton reminds us why it all seemed so necessary and important in the middle of the nineteenth century, and why it was doomed in the twentieth. ♦

Feminism vs. Multiculturalism?

The Liberal Project at Odds with Itself.

BY PETER BERKOWITZ

Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?
edited by Joshua Cohen, Michael Howard, and Martha Nussbaum
by Susan Moller Okin
with Respondents
Princeton Univ. Press, 146 pp., $30

In their introduction to this volume on the relation between feminism and multiculturalism, the editors announce that the views represented in the collection cover a wide range. Yet the author of the lead essay, Stanford political theorist Susan Moller Okin—perhaps the preeminent liberal feminist in the academy today—reveals in her concluding reply that the fifteen other contributors have given her not a single reason to qualify her opinions. "Many thanks," she writes, "to the respondents for their thoughtful and thought-provoking comments, many of which I agree with. Some of them extend my arguments in important ways, some of them I wish to argue against, and some of them I think indicate misperceptions of my position."

It may be, of course, that Okin is right and that the various respondents, where they differ from her, are wrong. Indeed, on the crucial issue, Okin is convincing: The multicultural exhortation to respect all cultures often conflicts with the liberal imperative to respect the freedom and equality of women. The root of the conflict lies in the fact that not all cultures respect individuals in the liberal way, and some cultures subordinate the individual to the common good or the good of a person or class.

Unfortunately, Okin's unshakable confidence in the rightness of her moral and political judgments blinds her to the merits of views she opposes and practices of which she disapproves; it also leads her to overlook the inadequacies of her own ideal and the limitations of the way of life she is defending. In this, Okin's feminist critique of multiculturalism exemplifies a malady of modern liberalism, whereby the virtue of toleration hardens into a crusade for conformity to the liberal vision of human flourishing, and a laudable appreciation of human diversity ossifies into contempt for ways of life that do not celebrate diversity as an ideal.

Okin's core argument is simple: The subjugation of women, by men or by cultures, is wrong. Liberal democracies should protect the individual rights of all women within their borders, including women whose cultures and religions sanction practices that deny women's fundamental rights. Liberal democracies should not grant minorities special group rights or privileges to assist them in preserving their culture or religion in a foreign land, as many theorists of multiculturalism wish. For individual rights are sacrosanct in a liberal democracy, oppression in all its forms is bad, and, Okin suggests, a culture or religion that deprives women of human dignity is not worthy of preservation.

Compelling as this argument may be when stated in the abstract, it prompts serious questions when applied to concrete matters of law and public policy. Where does subjugation leave off and a respectable way of life different from that cherished by liberals and feminists begin? Are all forms of subjugation and oppression properly

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the object of state action, or do some lie beyond the ken of government in a liberal democracy? What policies and laws provide the best means of enforcing individual rights? Which individual rights are fundamental and nonnegotiable?

Yet these vexing questions do not vex Okin. She categorically condemns as sexist and illiberal clitoridectomy, polygamy, arranged marriages of teenage girls, and also veiling (the practice whereby Muslim women cover their faces in public). None of these practices should be tolerated by liberal democracies, she argues, even if prohibiting them requires state intervention in religious life.

Although Okin does not cite John Locke, her view that government must regulate some aspects of private life can be defended on the liberal and constitutional grounds expounded in Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*. One way government respects the natural freedom and equality of all is by leaving questions of ultimate salvation to individuals and concerning itself only with the things of this world, which for Locke meant maintaining peace, securing liberty and equality before the law, and protecting property. But government limited by the principle of toleration does not leave religious authorities absolutely free. If a religious group wishes to sacrifice animals in its temple to propitiate its gods, then, though the practice be reviled by the majority, the government has no grounds to interfere. But if a religious group instead seeks to sacrifice children or virgins, then government is obliged to bar the practice, to prevent the ultimate deprivation of liberty and life.

For Okin, piety is superstition clothed in earnestness, and a life lived in obedience to God is a life of slavery.

While Okin's respondents agree that patriarchy is unjust, not all are convinced that the practices she ascribes to it are always wrong. Several respondents seek to place these practices in cultural or religious context and show how they can actually be seen to serve women's interests. For example, Northwestern University political theorist Bonnie Honig points out that veiling enables Muslim women who would otherwise stay at home because of their religious convictions about female modesty to go out into the world, acquire an education, and participate in public life.

Okin doesn't doubt that entering the public realm is better for women than remaining at home, but she cannot see the freedom veiling creates as anything more than a crumb tossed to the wretched. "Surely," she writes, "to

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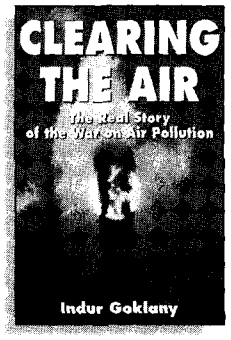
—Gregg Easterbrook
Author, *A Moment on the Earth*

This book makes the compelling argument that Washington's 30-year regulatory war against air pollution has actually done little to improve air quality. The cleaner air we enjoy today is, instead, the result of gains in per capita incomes, rapidly improving technology, and the shift from a manufacturing- to a service-based economy. The author also argues that state and local governments were actively taking steps to clean up the air before the federal government became involved.



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be unable to go out and practice one's profession without being enshrouded from head to toe is not, on the whole, an empowering situation in which to live, unless it is a temporary transition to greater freedom."

Though Okin may think she is putting herself in the position of another and arguing here for justice for the underdog, her "surely" gives the game away. For "surely" is scholarly shorthand for "No argument need be given for the assertion that follows, which is too obvious to question." Yet it is perfectly reasonable to wonder whether some women, on the whole, are empowered by modest dress. And it makes good sense to ask whether "greater freedom" should be the sole measure of empowerment and ought always to be preferred to greater piety.

Okin peremptorily forecloses such inquiries. To her, freedom rightly understood requires nothing short of emancipation from divine law; piety is in the best case superstition clothed in earnestness and solemnity; and a life lived in obedience to God is a life of slavery. Such reckless thinking and lack of sympathy for beliefs different from one's own, however, are not necessary features of the liberal mind. Rather, they reflect a failure of the liberal imagination.

It is a further failure of the liberal imagination for Okin to miss the fact that "greater freedom" can expose individuals to the tyranny of public opinion. Dressing as you please is not always liberating: Sometimes your choices about what to wear merely reflect social convention; and sometimes you make wrong judgments about the clothes that will best serve your interests. As law professor Azizah Y. Al-Hibri, a feminist and Muslim, provocatively asks, "Why is it oppressive to wear a head scarf but liberating to wear a miniskirt"? Honig and Al-Hibri's disagreement with Okin about veiling is at bottom a difference not over whether women should be respected as individuals but over what practices express that respect. This suggests that the multiculturalist thinking Okin opposes can be rooted in the very liberalism she claims as the source of her feminism.

Indeed, a common moral premise underlies the definitions of feminism and multiculturalism used by Okin and her respondents alike. Okin defines feminism as "the belief that women should not be disadvantaged by their sex, that they should be recognized as having human dignity equal to that of men, and that they should have the opportunity to live as fulfilling and freely chosen lives as men can." Feminism understood in this way is really modern liberalism made explicit for women. And the editors define multiculturalism as "the radical idea that people in other cultures, foreign and domestic, are human beings, too—moral equals, entitled to equal respect and concern, not to be discounted or treated as a subordinate caste." What the editors grandiosely describe as radical is only an attempt to work out for men and women who belong to minority or non-Western cultures the implications of the liberal idea that all human beings are free and equal.

Susan Moller Okin

Although they proceed from the same premise, both liberal feminists and proponents of multiculturalism tend to ignore vital dimensions of moral and political life and thus often reach different conclusions about how best to respect individuals in general and women in particular. Okin emphasizes autonomy, the capacity rationally to choose one's own way of life, and opportunities to learn a profession, earn a living, and participate in public affairs. Multiculturalists stress respect for the culture within which the individual develops and which many individuals see as constitutive of their identity and inseparable from their good. It is trite but true: What is needed is a sensibility that respects persons by respecting both the claims of autonomy and the claims of duty and community; for the inevitable clash between these goods is not a reason for rejecting either but an occasion for more refined thinking.

While there is much that is salutary in Okin's brief against multiculturalist complacency, her thinking fails to balance competing goods in a world of diverse cultures. Indeed, her liberal feminism betrays a complacency of its own, especially in regard to religion.

Consider Okin's invitation to understand "the founding myths of Greek and Roman antiquity, and of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam" as "rife with attempts to justify the control and subordination of women." Put aside Okin's casual equation of biblical faith with pagan religion and her nonchalant reduction of sacred scripture to myth. What remains astonishing is how crude and ill-informed is her indictment of patriarchy:

> Think of Athena, sprung from the head of Zeus, and of Romulus and Remus, reared without a human mother. Or Adam, made by a male God, who then (at least according to one of the two biblical versions of the story) created Eve out of part of Adam. Consider Eve, whose weakness led Adam astray.

Contrary to what Okin implies, Athena, though sprung from the head of Zeus, did have a mother, Zeus's first

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wife, the goddess Metis (who, having been swallowed by Zeus, gave birth to their daughter from within his body). Moreover, Athena herself, one of the twelve major Olympians, attests to a complex understanding of gender: She is the goddess of wisdom and warfare; she represents power, mastery, order, and public achievement; and she gave her name to the greatest city of ancient Greece.

It's true, as Okin suggests, that Romulus and Remus were briefly reared without a human mother. But it's also highly misleading. According to the Roman story, after a jealous king ordered their murder, the twin sons of Rhea Silvia were found and suckled by a she-wolf. Hence, during the period they were without a human mother, they were also without a human father. Moreover, while still young they were adopted by a shepherd, whose wife brought them up through young adulthood.

Similarly, it is the case that according to Chapter 2 of Genesis, God made Eve from a part of Adam. But as Okin implies in her parenthetical effort to finesse her tendentious reading, the account of the creation of man and woman in Chapter 1 of Genesis places the emphasis elsewhere. It clearly announces a revolutionary teaching about the grounds of human equality: "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Finally, while the Bible, as Okin reports, does teach that Eve caused Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, it also ascribes to Eve a hunger for moral wisdom and credits her with bringing knowledge of good and evil (with all the pain that entails) to humankind.

As one begins to consider the evidence that Okin believes seals the case against Greece, Rome, and Jerusalem for the crime of patriarchy, it becomes increasingly clear that, contrary to her condescending insinuations, the defendants' accounts of the beginnings ascribe to women surprising virtues and indispensable roles. In the rush to judgment, the prosecutor's passion and prejudice get the better of her reason.

The liberal tradition teaches that human reason is constantly vulnerable to disruption by passion and prejudice. Indeed, this is one of the key reasons that classical liberalism keeps the state out of the delicate business of caring for souls. Locke's wise restraint, it bears emphasizing, bars not only religious authorities from using government to save souls but also secular types from using the state to save souls from religion. ♦

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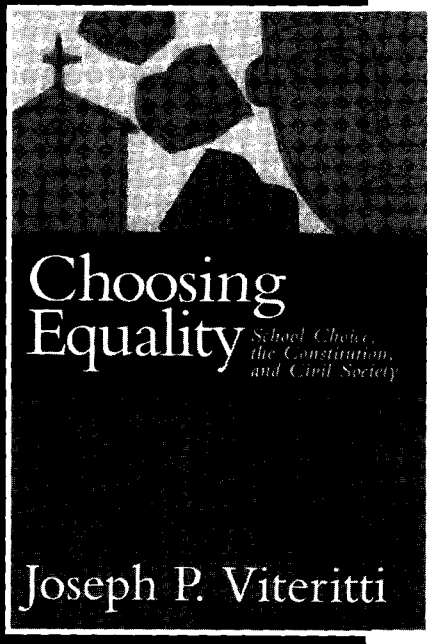

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The International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism ordained its first rabbi in Michigan this month.

—*The Forward*, October 15, 1999

Parody

Proceedings of the First Annual Passover Seder and Clam Bake

First Michigan Atheist Shul
Dearborn, Michigan
April 13, 2000

Rabbi Christopher Winthrop O'Casey presiding

RABBI O'CASEY: Good evening, friends. First I'd like to thank Mary for bringing the mayonnaise. This is some of the best mayonnaise I've ever tasted.

MARY: Thanks, Rabbi Chris.

RABBI O'CASEY: Now I'd like to talk about the Passover story, which as I'm sure many of you are aware is central to our identity as Jews. The story really starts in Egypt a long time ago when Jews were an oppressed out-group held down by a hegemonic power structure. There was a young man named Moses who had assimilated into the larger culture, but still he felt the need for some distinct identity. And when he saw some of the Egyptians committing a hate crime against a Jew, he realized he had become the pharaoh's enabler. So he went to the pharaoh and spoke truth to power: "You are disrespecting my cultural identity." But the pharaoh was not responsive. So to raise his consciousness, Moses said, "If you do not let my people go, I will unleash plagues upon you. You will feel neurotic and anxious and your palaces will suffer from a lack of feng shui. But if you let us go, my people Israel will vote Democratic and support Afrocentric curricula in the public schools."

So the pharaoh let the Jews go, but he changed his mind. And the Jews were in such a hurry to leave they did not have time to make leavened bread, which is why even today during the eight days of Passover we eat matzo, unless it is inconvenient, in which case we go back to Wonder Bread. The Jews were fleeing from the Egyptian army when the Red Sea suddenly dried up on account of global warming. And then they began wandering in the desert. One day Moses was out practicing his fairway shots and he came upon a burning bush. Aware that brush fires can threaten homes and endanger animals, he poured some water on it, but it wouldn't go out. Then he thought he heard a voice telling him to take off his shoes, so he decided he needed to get back to camp and have some herbal tea and a massage. After that he felt much better.

But the Jewish people had begun to worship at the feet of a golden calf, which Moses found loud and vulgar, so he said to himself, "I've got to lay down some rules here." And he consulted a focus group, which came up with what have since become known as the Three Commandments. They are:

I. Thou shalt change thy name so it sounds more normal.

II. Thou shalt attend services no more than twice a year, and on Yom Kippur don't worry about fasting.

III. Thou shalt worry about the Religious Right and declare it scary, because at any moment it could launch a pogrom against nonobservant, Lexus-owning corporate tax attorneys.

And with these rules to guide them, the Jews moved peacefully into Israel. And the children of Israel said unto Moses, "Do we really have to go to Jerusalem? There are all those zealots there who won't let us shop on Saturdays. Can't we settle in Tel Aviv, where there are beaches?" And so it came to pass, and the Jewish people multiplied and intermarried and raised nice little Protestant kids in Larchmont, Evanston, and Santa Monica. And Moses saw that it was good and went to Boca for the winters, where he had a time share.

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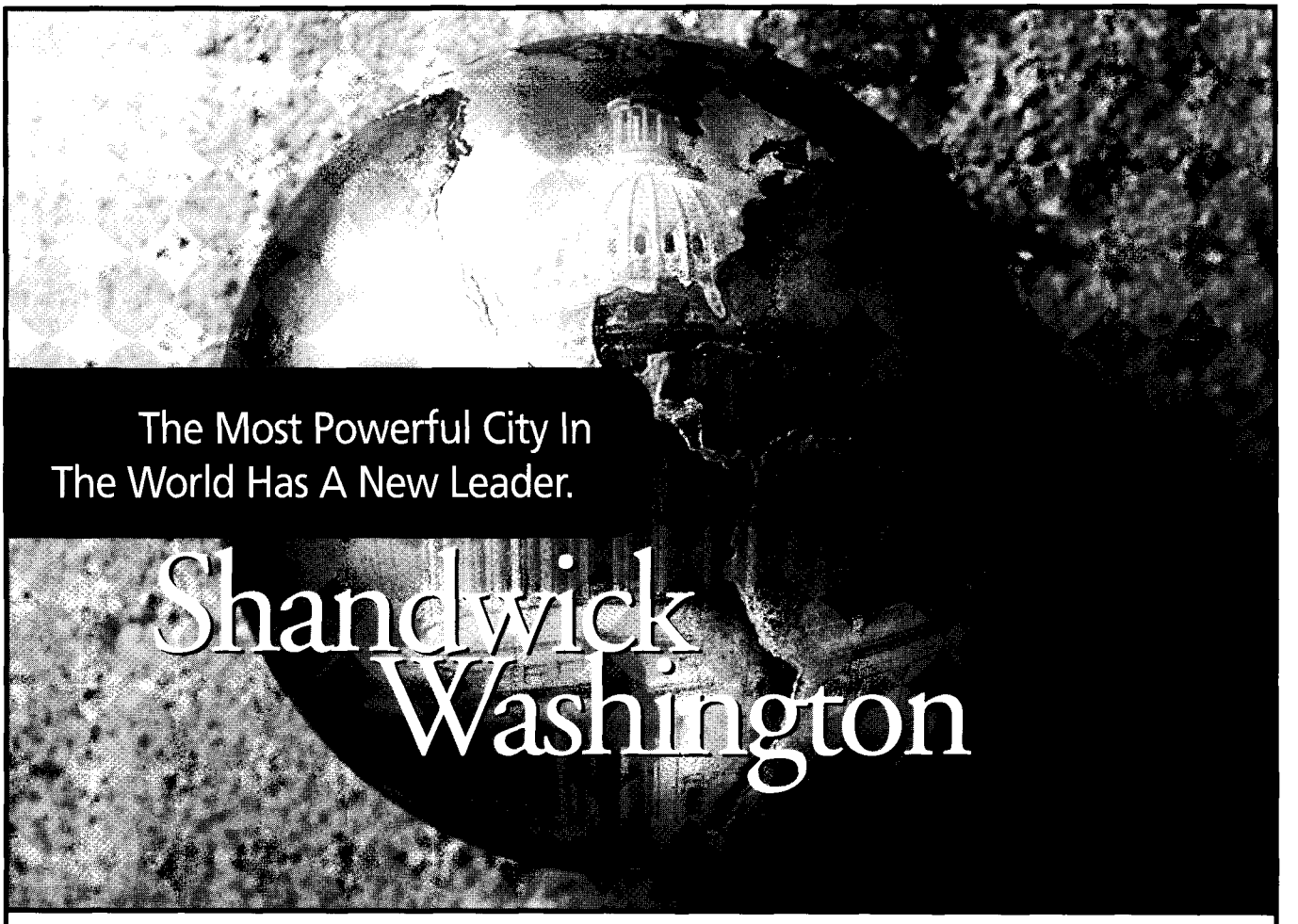

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